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NATIONAL IDEALISM AND THE
BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

NATIONAL IDEALISM AND THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

*An Essay in Re-interpretation
and Revision*

BY

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COMMON PLEAS
AND THE BOOK OF
NATURAL HISTORY

THE BOOK OF NATURE
AND THE BOOK OF NATURE

GENERAL

THE BOOK OF NATURE

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"The only infallible guardian of truth is the spirit of truthfulness."—
GEORGE TYRRELL.

"I looked forward, through the present age of loud disputes but generally weak convictions, to a future which shall unite the best qualities of the critical with the best qualities of the organic periods: unchecked liberty of thought, unbounded freedom of individual action in all modes not hurtful to others; but also, convictions as to what is right and wrong, useful and pernicious, deeply engraven on the feelings by early education and general unanimity of sentiment, and so firmly grounded in reason and in the true exigencies of life, that they shall not, like all former and present creeds, religious, ethical and political, require to be periodically thrown off and replaced by others."—JOHN STUART MILL.

"Perhaps in religion, as in politics, the age of the symbol is passing away, and a solemn manifestation may be approaching of the idea as yet hidden in that symbol."—GIUSEPPE MAZZINI.

"Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks; methinks I see her as an eagle mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam: purging and unscaling her long abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance; while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amazed at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticate a year of sects and schisms."—JOHN MILTON.



FOREWORD

PROBABLY no generation of Christian life in any community has ever passed but that someone filled with its spirit has been led, upon occasion, to maintain that faith in Christ is and must be identical with faith in any and every phase of righteousness. A beautiful instance of such identification is found in an utterance of St Anselm. "In 1012, the Danes"—so Professor Gardiner tells the story—

seized Aelfheah, Archbishop of Canterbury, and offered to set him free if he would pay a ransom for his life. He refused to do so, lest he should have to wring money from the poor in order to pay it. The drunken Danes pelted him with bones, till one of the number clave his skull with an axe. He was soon counted as a martyr. Long afterwards, one of the most famous of his successors, the Norman Lanfranc, doubted whether he was really a martyr, as he had not died for the faith. "He that dies for righteousness," answered the gentle Anselm, "dies for the faith"; and to this day the name of Aelfheah is retained as St Alphege in the list of English saints.

The teaching of this volume is based upon the principle which lies at the heart of Anselm's utterance. The test that any man is living for God, for Christ, for the Holy Spirit, is his readiness to die rather than wring money from the poor or commit any other form of social injustice.

But if this be the test, there is no escaping the conclusion that righteousness itself is the only true and living God—that the only true and living God is nothing more and nothing less than righteousness.

The supreme revelation of our day consists in that insight by which the hitherto fleeting glimpse of the identity of righteousness with God is becoming the steady vision of a universal principle. But this revelation involves a train of further illuminations equal in value to itself. Inevitably follows from it, for instance, a perception of the identity of the sphere of righteousness with human society on earth. The end of religion, however inward, however spiritual, however mystical, is the perfection of families, cities and States, and the federation of nations.

This revelation of our day is dividing the professed disciples of Christ into three antagonistic camps. Those who follow the new gleam in perfect faith insist that the whole concern of religion is the establishment of social justice here on earth. By arousing protest, this new doctrine and the new agitation in obedience to it are driving into closer consolidation, as a second militant group, those who identify religion with the use of supernatural means towards some salvation of individual souls in a life beyond death. A third camp is organising itself which consists of those who, while touched by the new thought, still cling to the old. They maintain that the new emphasis of social justice and the new valuation of the family, the city and the State are wholly within the domain of religion, but do not constitute its entire sphere. The Church, they say, has perhaps at times sacrificed earth for heaven, but it need not now replace the motive of attaining salvation after death by that of perfecting the life of London; each motive, they would insist, may

reinforce the other, since to work for London secures admission to heaven.

My own conviction is that social justice is a jealous God, and will not tolerate one heart-beat of yearning towards the realisation of any other good. Thou shalt not work for London in order to save souls from a hell after death. Otherwise, as Archbishop of Canterbury, St Alphege might have wrung money from the poor to ransom his life. Appalling to me, accordingly, is the strange blindness of the two camps who are fighting wholly or in part for another world; for they are beginning to affirm that the exclusive identification of religion with the cause of communal life is anti-Christian—nay, is the very form of paganism which Christianity overcame. An instance of the spiritual blindness of those who boast themselves to be on the side of the angels is found in Mr G. K. Chesterton's criticism (in *The Nation* of May 16, 1908) of my own championship of communal religion in a recent volume entitled *National Idealism and a State Church*. What I there attempted was a demonstration, sociological and psychological, of the identity of Judaism and Christianity with the moral idealism of nations. But the Judaic element in my synthesis Mr Chesterton mistook for paganism. His own Christianity had so far outgrown its Judaic root as to retain no relation or vital connection with it; my judgment was, however, that to-day we see a new resolving of the agelong contradiction between Judaism and Christianity. Judaism failed of old to realise its national ideal in a political State; but that ideal has survived, in a condition of suspended animation, for two thousand years in the Christian Church—the witness of which is the fact that the Church has retained the Old Testament. And now that for some centuries the nations of the world have been awakening to a new and

more spiritual self-consciousness, a synthesis of Jewish nationalism with Christian universal humanism is beginning to take place. One may interpret this new synthesis either as a return to Judaism, which will some day culminate not only in national churches for the Gentiles, but even in a political State for the Jews on their ancient territory ; or as a return to the Christianity which existed before the nationalistic policy of the Christians was buried in the ruins of the Temple of Jerusalem in the year 70. In my book on *National Idealism and a State Church* I was attempting to lead Christians back to the steps of the Temple of the old Jerusalem ; but Mr Chesterton, for all his gift of detecting deeper meanings, was so confused by my seeming paradox as to lose his bearings altogether. While he was walking with me up the Temple steps of the old—and the New—Jerusalem, he imagined I was leading him along the Appian Way to some shrine of Julius Cæsar !

Whenever I read the New Testament with the thought in mind that the cause of communal life here on earth is the essence of Christ's message, I am especially astonished at the error of a professed Christian who would identify the religion of national idealism with pagan teachings. If this identification be not the essence of Christ's message, it is a little strange that not over an individual soul but over a city Christ uttered his tenderest words of pitying love and of personal anguish. But possibly Mr Chesterton may detect paganism even in the words, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wing, and ye would not ! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."

The most striking and significant feature in the recent

Pan-Anglican Congress was the bold, intense and general sympathy for the new and jealous identification of Christian faith with devotion to the communal cause. It was as if the whole Anglican Church had become animated with the spirit of St Anselm and felt that his was the spirit of Christ. And, in fact, for all England there has arisen of recent years the necessity of a choice like that which presented itself in 1012 to St Alphege. The Church of England feels itself called upon to decide whether or not it shall go on appropriating, for the life of "worldliness, cupidity, clerical ambition, episcopal parade, obsequious class estimates, the lust of the eye and the pride of life," wealth that might put an end to poverty; or, renouncing these, identify herself wholly with the cause of social reform.

There have always been witnesses, as I have said, to the identity of the only true and living God with the advancement of social justice; and the beginning of the twentieth century differs from former epochs only in the degree to which this insight has become prevalent. In order to test the extent to which it has spread, one perhaps cannot do better than to note whether in unexpected connections it spontaneously finds expression. If one comes across it here, there and everywhere, one may trust the inference that the thought is in the air; for no lover of a new idea will get the impression of such prevalence if it does not exist. My own observation is that the sense of the identity of true religion with devotion to social causes is sweeping through the souls of men to-day as did in George Fox's time the thought of the inner light, and in John Wesley's of the immediate experience of Jesus Christ in the heart.

One might perhaps expect to find this sense of the identity of God with the Social Cause in such a volume

of essays as has recently appeared under the title *Anglican Liberalism*. And there it is ; in the opening essay passages occur like the following (from which I have already quoted one clause):—"But, I say, learn from the Labour party in social reform grandeur of moral purpose. I was at the large meeting in the Queen's Hall, Langham Place, in February, 1906, soon after the General Election, when Mr Keir Hardie presided over 'London's welcome to the Labour members.' I shall never forget the *spirit* of that assembly ; the generosity of the common emotion ; the mental melting of all distinctions of rank and education in the fires of human brotherhood, in the burning intent to help less happy lives and to heal the social woes of England. Never, I must sorrowfully confess, did I find such a spirit at a social reform meeting of Churchmen. We Churchmen must do as those Labour men have done, we must herein *get the mind of Christ* ; we must cast out and hurl over the precipice the demons in our Church of worldliness, cupidity, clerical ambition, episcopal parade, obsequious class estimates, the lust of the eye and the pride of life."

But I will cite, as a test of the prevalence of the doctrine of the identity of God with the communal cause, a passage in a book which had no conscious intent to emphasise the social character of religion, and in a connection which could not account for the introduction of the sentiment, were it not in the air. The book I allude to is by G. F. Bradby, and is entitled *Dick: A Story without a Plot*. In a chapter named "Sunday Thoughts" occurs the following passage :—

I am afraid that in my young days I regarded each individual service [in the chapel], if not as an actual bore, at least as an uninteresting duty ; and yet, if I were to go down to my old school again, the first thing I should do

would be to visit the chapel and sit in my old seat. Not that I consciously associate the place with any spiritual crisis in my life. I don't know how it was with others, but certainly with me remorse for sins committed, or new ideas of duty, came in the stir and bustle of actual life. But it was, somehow, as one sat in the chapel, day by day and week by week, that, gradually and almost unconsciously, one imbibed that most fruitful of all school experiences, *the sense of unity and fellowship with people whom one hardly knew*. And this leads me to wonder whether, after all, the men who are responsible for the religious teaching at schools are quite on the right track. I have often discussed the question with a clerical friend of mine who was a school-master before he took to parochial work. He maintains that the beginning of all religion is a love of God. I hold that children, at least, only get to the love of God through the love of man : their parents first ; then, in an ever-widening circle, their fellows. And I hold that the basis of school religion should be an appeal to duty, to pity, to the latent sense of responsibility which can be evoked in any tolerably generous heart. . . . My friend objects that this is ethics, not religion. But, after all, if the Sermon on the Mount is not religion, it is something better than religion ; or it may be that Christ knew that we could only get at religion through ethics, as I imagine St Paul did.

What do we find here but a reassertion of the principle of St Anselm, that he who dies for righteousness dies for the faith ?

My identification of religious faith with the cause of social righteousness has logically involved me in a purely humanistic interpretation of the essential terms of religion. I have presumed to maintain that Righteousness is God ; devotion to it, religion ; a turning to it, as an active principle in the world, for new inspiration and guidance, prayer ; the manifestation of it in persons devoted to the redemption of the world, Christ—because Jesus first exemplified supremely the Redeemer-principle, and was

called Christ. This step which I have taken has brought upon me considerable adverse criticism, the purport of which, although stated by various writers in different ways, is especially well embodied in characteristic comments by two of my critics. I will cite first a passage from Mr Chesterton, as in replying to it I shall have an opportunity for throwing further light upon my own position :—

Of course [says Mr Chesterton], we do use religious or mythological terms with reference only to an abstract spirit or agency. But generally this is only done with dead religions or mythologies. Thus, offering our children to Moloch now only means offering them to cruelty and destruction ; but if there were really a little temple of Moloch in Battersea, with a corrugated iron roof, we might avoid the term as confusing. Or again, our lighter journalism still talks (I regret to say) about the darts of Cupid ; but if there really were an important Nonconformist sect which believed in the positive personal existence of Cupid, we should find it necessary to make a distinction. The whole of Dr Coit's proposals for loosening or expanding the sense of words is really founded on the assumption that Christ is as dead as Moloch or Cupid. That is where he makes a mistake.

In reply, I wish first to point out the lack of intimacy with other religions than his own which Mr Chesterton seems to betray. I had thought that Greek scholars were agreed that the ancient Greek religion and mythology are not dead. For instance, Mr Sidney Colvin, in commenting upon Keats's use of Greek themes, speaks almost with pity of those who hold the view to which Mr Chesterton apparently commits himself, for he believes that it is they that are dead, and not the Greek mythology. "Critics," says Mr Colvin—

even intelligent critics, sometimes complain that Keats should have taken . . . subjects of his art from what they

call the "dead" mythology of ancient Greece. As if that mythology could ever die : as if the ancient fables, in passing out of the transitory state of things believed, into the state of things remembered and cherished in imagination, had not put on a second life more enduring and more fruitful than the first. Faiths, as faiths, perish one after another ; but each in passing away bequeaths for the enrichment of the after-world whatever elements it has contained of imaginative or moral truth or beauty. The polytheism of ancient Greece, embodying the instinctive effort of the brightest-gifted human race to explain its earliest experiences of nature and civilisation, of the thousand moral and material forces, cruel or kindly, which environ and control the life of man on earth, is rich beyond measure in such elements ; and if the modern world at any time fails to value them, it is the modern mind which is in so far dead, and not they.

Now, I—acting on the principle so admirably expressed in these words of Mr Colvin's—would fain have helped to rescue the Christian religion from the death which minds in so far dead have imposed upon its abiding elements of imaginative and moral truth and beauty. I believe that Christianity is about to put on a second life, more enduring and more fruitful than the first ; and I believe that those who bring this consummation to pass will be those for whom mythology can never die, because they see that it is a reference, poetic and inspiring, to "experiences of nature and civilisation, of the thousand moral and material forces, cruel or kindly, which environ and control the life of man on earth." Can Mr Chesterton really be in so far dead that he does not see this ? Or is it possible that he is shamming death ?

What Mr Colvin says is not the expression of a view peculiar to himself. Further on in these pages I cite a passage from Professor Gilbert Murray to the same effect, and possibly more pointed ; and the mention of Professor

Murray and Mr Colvin tempts me to remind my readers that those journalists who are most intoxicated in style do not always lead one most straightly or steadily home to the truth. Let Mr Chesterton's disciples take a course in Professor Murray and Mr Colvin, or—for that matter—in Keats and Shelley, and they will another time challenge his statement that one who treats Christian nomenclature as did Keats the terms of Greek mythology, is classifying Christianity with dead religions. I confess that Christianity is as dead to me as is the religion of ancient Greece; but this is only another way of saying that to me it is intensely and vividly alive; for I know my Greek religion from my Keats, my Shelley, my Plutarch, my Euripides and my Plato—and not from my Chesterton.

Now, however, we come to Moloch and Cupid. In my view, there is one striking difference between Jesus Christ and these deities, to which I am surprised that Mr Chesterton himself seems oblivious—else how could he impute the oversight to me? He would place the three in the same category as regards the reality of their existence; but in my judgment Moloch never existed, nor did Cupid, as an individual human being living on earth; whereas Jesus Christ—so I believe—did. I am startled, therefore, to learn that on my assumption Christ is as dead as Moloch or Cupid. It is not true that a man who has lived is afterwards dead in the sense in which the mere poetic personification of an abstract quality or energy of human nature is dead. When we say that we offer our children to Moloch, we not only mean that we offer them to cruelty and destruction, but we further imply that Moloch never was anything else but cruelty and destruction. When, however, we offer our children to Jesus Christ, it is true that we are offering

them to the Redeemer-principle, universal and active to-day and for ever ; but we also mean that we are leading them back to a distinct and real person in human history, embodied in literature, and traceable as originating or inspiring a great organised movement of religious life. It is as shocking, then, to my sense of truth and my gratitude to Jesus Christ as it must be to the most orthodox and conventional believer in him, to read that on my assumption he is as dead as Moloch or Cupid. It is as if somebody should tell me that in my view of English history Milton or Wordsworth had no other kind of reality and have no other sort of existence than such abstractions as liberty or justice or equality. These are by no means dead ; but they do not belong to the same category of living realities as do the great men, whom I devoutly revere for that kind of suffering and that heroic bravery which one can never attribute either to an abstraction or to a poetic personification of an abstraction. The day will come—in the second and more fruitful life of Christianity—when men who hold my view of Jesus Christ will not tolerate so passively as they do now the spiritual airs which religious animists, in their contempt for Christian humanists, are wont to flaunt. It will be discovered that persons who have dropped the spiritistic theory of Christ's activity in the world to-day do something more than admire him as Mr Chesterton admires primroses ; it will be seen that they live by him, draw strength, peace and hope from him, with as full an inflow of grace as the spiritists derive from him.

But let us now consider, in regard to Moloch, whether it would be expedient to avoid his name, were a little temple to him to be erected (with a corrugated iron roof) in Battersea. In my opinion, if there were a sect there

who actually believed that Moloch was something more than cruelty and destruction—that he was really a discarnate spirit, obsessing human beings—that would be only the greater reason why all the sane humanists of Battersea should adopt the word Moloch as nothing more than a poetic personification of cruelty and destruction, and should everywhere preach in the local schools and churches that he had no other existence. Indeed, until there be little temples erected to him there is small occasion for using his name ; but the moment the new spiritism, which seems to be taking possession of many minds that have broken away from the discipline of science and of logic, begins to objectify cruelty as a personal agent controlling human beings, it will be our duty, in the name of sanity, to counteract this demonism by accustoming people to the use of the name in a purely scientific and poetic sense.

Now, to-day there are everywhere temples, not merely to Christ the divine human being in his earth-life, nor to Christ the divine influence radiating from his earth-life among men, but to a discarnate spirit which is called by his name. This seems to me an occasion for the worshippers of the divine human being in his earth-life, and of his influence after death, to set up in every parish of England a temple where the name of Christ shall be magnified and glorified, but explained not to mean a disembodied spirit.

In regard to the darts of Cupid, which Mr Chesterton tells us are mentioned in the lighter journalism that he reads : suppose Battersea should erect also a temple not only to love and the fascination of man and woman, but to some personal agency which it was believed actually took possession of unfortunate mortals and stirred these emotions in them—what would the remnant of the sane

in Battersea most wisely do? Would they lie low and never mention the name of Cupid, or would they boldly say that he was none other than an appetite, a desire, and sometimes a holy self-sacrifice, having no existence except in the minds and bodies of living human beings?

Does Mr Chesterton really believe that the more cultivated Greeks actually had faith in the existence of a personal, self-conscious agent whom they named Aphrodite? Let him read his *Hippolytus* again; or, if he has not time nowadays to resume his Greek studies, let him take Professor Gilbert Murray's word for it that she was scarcely a goddess in the sense of a discarnate person, at least in the mind of Euripides and his audiences; and yet neither was she, on the other hand, a nothing, and therefore to be overlooked as if she were not a factor at all, cruel or kindly, in human experience.

Mr Chesterton, then, has not proved by any means that the moment Moloch and Cupid are to be worshipped in chapels in Battersea—as they will be if his philosophy of religion becomes widespread in that suburb—the rest of London must eschew the use of their names, for fear of confusing their devotees. So real and alive are the forces in the human heart which these terms personify, that when one says that Christ, on my assumption, is as dead as Moloch or Cupid, I can only answer that I wish to heaven Christ were as alive—in Battersea or any place else—as they are. If the Redeemer-principle had been no more dead in the world than these, the Kingdom had come long ago. Mr Chesterton may take heart and hope, as a Christian, the moment he begins to find Christ as energetic, dominant, regulative and persistent in his beloved Battersea as are the cruelty and destruction of selfishness and the blindness of individual fascination of

person for person. It is no honour to Christ to suppose that he is more alive than he is ; and it is unwise, from the point of view of idealistic patriotism, to pretend that Moloch and Cupid are less alive than they are. They may have no chapels in Battersea ; but that may be because they are so secure of worship in deed and life that there is no occasion for formal ceremony.

Now let me cite a passage from a criticism by Mrs Gilliland Husband, in a supplement to the *Ethical World* for March 15, 1908. It follows immediately upon a citation of my definition of religion, which is this :—

Religion is the focussing of men's attention steadfastly and reverently upon some Being from which they believe that they have derived the greatest benefits, in order to derive still further benefits.

This definition Mrs Husband introduces with these words :—

To find his definition of religion, Dr Coit follows the old and discredited plan of looking to the lower forms for it.

And she follows it with this comment :—

One thinks irresistibly of the familiar definition of gratitude : "A lively sense of good things to come." This is indeed one of the things in the book which make us wonder whether, after all, Dr Coit is serious, or whether he is "getting at" us in a huge joke ; . . .

Now, if this be accepted as the definition of religion, we shall be obliged to accept as religious in quality that emotion with which a pack of hounds focus their attention on the huntsman at the moment when he holds aloft the sacrificial fox. Very steadfastly and reverently they attend, for they know their master, and he carries a whip. They believe him to be (nay, they know him to be) the being from whom they have received the greatest benefits. They attend "in order to derive still further benefits." Dogs are noble animals ; they are capable of a sincere, disinterested affection, which often puts so-called "love" in the human to

shame. But is this particular focussing of attention to which I have alluded one of the noblest moments in the annals of dog life? Can it be said to be a moment of canine religion?

Upon reading this passage, I am astonished to find in it a proof that there are persons to whom the word "benefits" has exclusively a selfish connotation. I had never for a moment dreamed that persons of literary culture, and at all acquainted with the life of the finest types of humanity, would imagine that the word "benefits" should refer simply to goods which we wish to get for ourselves, and not to goods which we wish to see bestowed upon those we love. I framed my definition after a close and prolonged study of the Lord's Prayer. I noted there an appeal, steadfast and reverent, involving a focussing of attention upon a Being from which the suppliants believed that they had derived the greatest benefits. The benefit they had derived was the enthusiasm for the redemption of mankind, which they had caught from their master. They had caught faith in the coming of the Kingdom; but they wanted more faith, more hope—a belief that the name of the blessed Being should become universally hallowed, that the will of God should be done on earth and the reign of lovingkindness established. And I thought I saw—to use the phrase which Mrs Gilliland Husband cites as a familiar definition of gratitude—I thought I saw in the Lord's Prayer a lively sense of good things to come. This definition may amuse the cynic, but it need not discourage the saint. Others may not believe it, but he is fully aware from experience that he also has received benefits, although he possesses nothing which the cynic may envy; and that he also expects good things to come, as much as the most hardened self-seeker of them all. It could not but be a shock to me, having

drafted my definition on the psychological outlines of the Lord's Prayer and in relation to the factors involved in the Lord's Prayer, to find that anyone should for an instant imagine that the word "benefits" and the desire to get further benefits should refer only to the lowest side of human nature, and not also to the highest activities and the profoundest realities of the human spirit. Mrs Husband says that my definition of religion is one of the things in my book which makes her wonder whether I am serious; but her comment makes me wonder whether, when writing it, she was not for the moment nodding.

But let us now hunt with what may some day become Mrs Gilliland Husband's famous pack of hounds. I was framing a definition of religion from the highest manifestation of it which I know—the Lord's Prayer; being perfectly sure that if it covered the highest manifestation of religion it would also comprehend the most primitive and the morally lowest. But I had not troubled to seek out instances of the lowest human religions; much less had I descended to observe sub-human manifestations of craving and volition. I am grateful to Mrs Gilliland Husband for having done this work for me. I accept her hound story as an admirable illustration of religion at a low and elemental stage, just as I accept the Lord's Prayer as its highest manifestation. My critic is quite right in saying that, according to my definition, the quality of emotion with which a pack of hounds would focus their attention on the huntsman at the moment when he holds aloft the sacrificial fox would be religious, provided the hounds were reverent in their attention to the huntsman, and provided the fox were the greatest benefit in existence which they wished to derive. I notice, however, one slip of logic in her admirable phrasing of her illustration. She

speaks of the *sacrificial* fox ; but here she is thinking not of the pack of hounds—for the fox is not being sacrificed for them—but of their god, the huntsman ; and so I confess myself somewhat confused, not being intimately acquainted with sub-human psychology, but having studied rather the Old and New Testaments for my instances of emotions truly religious in quality. But the word “sacrificial,” I am quite sure, should have been omitted ; and, while I cannot put myself into the psychic position of the hounds, I cannot help suspecting that the fox, after all, was not the whole benefit they desired. That huntsman held them, so to speak, in the hollow of his hand. Not only the essential conditions of life for them depended upon their obedience to him, but he might punish and torture them for disobedience. Pathetic, so far as I can imagine it, is the state of mind of Mrs Husband’s hounds ; it is not they that are despicable, nor the quality of their emotion. Dogs, which are slaves to man—poor things !—do not manifest a religion unworthy of our respect when they look reverently to the huntsman ; but what we must think of the huntsman is another matter.

In the very chapter where I gave my definition of religion, I had especially stated that I believed it would cover the lowest possible, as well as the highest conceivable, form of religion. Indeed, my study of the religions of primitive man has convinced me that a scholar like Mrs Husband, without taking an illustration from the kennel, might have cited instances of a far more degraded order than that presented by her hounds. Man, perhaps, as she says of dogs, is a noble being ; but writ large in the history of human evolution is the record of religious practices which have sunk men below the level of any spiritual condition to which the lower animals have been dragged, even by English huntsmen. But I

agree with my critic that definitions of religion should be suggested by the highest forms of prayer and worship ; I even go further, for I believe in limiting illustrative instances also to the highest forms.

But it is evident that what Mrs Husband objects to in particular is that my definition of religion limits prayer to the expectation of good things to come, whereas she seems inclined to set a higher value than I upon an immediate, ecstatic union with some being beyond oneself, without any reference to any task or purpose of the human will, or any craving, as yet unsatisfied, of the human heart. When I turn to the Lord's Prayer, however, I find no evidence of union with the Father suggested, except in the desire to see his will fulfilled on earth, and in the craving that his disciples and apostles might have sufficient daily bread to carry on his work, and might be hemmed in from temptation and evil sufficiently not to have their own good work intercepted or its influence marred. I find no evidence in the Lord's Prayer of any emotion like that to which Mrs Husband, in another passage of her criticism, alludes—of the union of the lover with the beloved. I believe that many so-called spiritually-minded persons have fallen away from the dignity and virility of the religion exemplified in the Lord's Prayer, and that not everything that might be sweet in spiritual practice is necessarily good. Therefore, until I see evidences in what, with most people, I regard as the highest manifestations of religion, of something else than devout and reverent attention to a being in order to receive the supreme blessings of life, I think it safer to restrict what influence I may have to the advocacy of this as the essence of religion.

It might be well to add that, from my point of view, to prove an act to be religious is by no means to prove it

to be commendable. There have been good and bad religions, and only the good are to be approved. Therefore no citation of unworthy practices which would fall under the definition I have given could prove that my definition was wrong ; it could only prove that some religions have been wrong.

S. C.

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NATIONAL IDEALISM AND THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

CHAPTER I

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS : "THE LORD THY GOD"

THE Ten Commandments are given a striking prominence in the Book of Common Prayer ; the rubric enjoins that they shall always be read prior to the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and that they shall be committed to memory by every person before confirmation. No such mark of high esteem is given to any other part of the Old Testament, nor to any part of the New except the Lord's Prayer. It is evident, therefore, that the founders of the Anglican Church regarded the Decalogue as containing the quintessence of the Old Testament, and considered this quintessence of such importance, not only in substance but even in form, that it should be imprinted indelibly from childhood on the mind of every communicant.

This throwing of emphasis upon the Decalogue by England as she awoke to national self-consciousness in religion was an ecclesiastical innovation, which of itself alone proves that the English Reformation was not simply a nationalistic protest against religious cosmopolitanism, nor by any means a merely individualistic assertion of the

right of private conscience against the dictation of priestly authority, but was also distinctly an ethical movement.

Indeed, there are three trends plainly discernible in the Anglicanism of the sixteenth century, which have been almost universally overlooked, yet which are as well marked and historically as significant as its nationalism and its new claim for the individual conscience.

The Book of Common Prayer, when compared with the Roman Catholic Missal and Breviary, exhibits, in the first place, a bold move away from supernaturalism. For ages the Church had practised universally the ceremony of exorcising evil spirits, and that of invoking good spirits. Here was a supposed intercourse with personal agencies, both good and bad, who, although outside of the living organism of human society, were yet believed to be manipulating human events and the destinies of mortals. But the Anglican Church suppressed both exorcism and the invocation of saints. Another striking evidence of the trend towards organic humanism under natural law is seen when the Burial Service of the Anglican rite is compared with that of the Roman. Such a comparison reveals the fact that, whether conscious or unconscious of the philosophic nature of what they were doing, the revisers of the Church of England turned the attention of mourners away from the soul of the deceased as concerns its existence after death, towards the souls of the mourners themselves, their responsibilities and their spiritual privileges. Prayers for the soul of the dead were forbidden by the genius of the new Anglicanism. Anxiety for the welfare of friends after death, instead of continuing to be systematically intensified and even awakened by the Church, was now assuaged by guiding the thought of the bereaved to other interests. While there is still full recognition in the Burial Service of personal immortality, and an expression

of hope for a life after death, the imagination of the mourner is now far less engaged in this direction ; the offices of the Church cease to be used on behalf of the dead. The life beyond the grave becomes henceforth, like the heaven of Lucretius and the Epicureans, removed from impact upon us mortals.

Because the Prayer Book has scarcely been modified since the sixteenth century, not a step further away from supernaturalism has been taken by the Anglican Church in the centuries that have followed ; yet the whole evolution of scientific thought in three centuries has been in this direction, until now all the educated portions of English society have advanced far beyond the stage preserved to us in the nation's manual of religion.

The second trend, which is scarcely alluded to by writers on the history of the Church of England, but which marks the transition from Romish to Anglican rites, is that towards social democracy—not only towards liberty of individual conscience, but towards the social fellowship of all communicants as equals. What was the meaning of the Romish withholding of the wine from the laity in the Communion Service but an assertion of the exclusive right of the priesthood to the enthusiasm, the ecstasy, the creative energy, the initiative and authority of religious utterance and control ? When the Church of England insisted upon communion in both kinds, it gave a blow of deadly import to princely priestcraft. Social democracy has ever since advanced with increasing mass and momentum, until it has penetrated almost the whole of organised life. At last its pressure is beginning to tell within the Church ; and as in the sixteenth century it required communion in both kinds for the people, it will in its full and logical consciousness in the twentieth century strip doctrines, forms and ecclesiastical polity of

every vestige of that irresponsible ascendancy of priests by which Church government has repressed the spiritual and secular self-realisation of the masses.

In citing the return to communion in both kinds, I have given only one of many instances of the movement towards democracy discernible in the changes which accompanied the assertion that the sovereign of England was the supreme head of the Church, and that no foreign bishop should henceforth possess any authority within this realm. It is true that an almost absolute monarch for the moment secured greater domination thereby ; but whoever has eyes can see that the forces that caused it were democratic, and were the very forces which ultimately have established constitutional government, and have shifted the political centre of gravity from the kingship and the House of Lords to the Commons.

Thirdly, more marked and more significant—and yet more completely overlooked—is the new emphasis given to morality as a factor in religion. I might specify many instances of this fresh development, but here I must dwell upon the one which I have already mentioned : the Anglican Church, departing from the Roman use, inserted into the Communion Service the most decidedly ethical document of the whole of the Old Testament, and England as a nation enjoined upon all parents and teachers not only to expound this document to the young, but to see that the young could repeat its very words at that crisis in their moral life when the Church called upon them to assume in individual responsibility what in their infancy their sponsors in baptism had vowed for them.

Our Church reformers of the sixteenth century were only giving the same pre-eminence to the Decalogue, and only making the same use of it, which those ancient

Jewish statesmen had done who first cast it into the form in which it appears in the book of Deuteronomy. The writers of that book believed it would prove a ready and convenient instrument in the moral education of the young of the nation. In Deuteronomy, God is represented as saying of the Ten Commandments, “Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets before thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thine house and on thy gates.” This policy was re-adopted by England when she took from Rome and assumed for herself the responsibility of being the religious educator of her people.

But what England thought fit to do then, or even what we may to-day acknowledge to have been fit then, can be no infallible guide to the statesmen of our day. The sole question which should confront us is whether the Ten Commandments are worthy still to hold in a national manual of moral edification the same place which has been assigned them in the past. The question now is : If we were to-day to begin anew constructing a system of ethical culture for the people, and were to take no other principle as our guide than national utility, what treatment of the Ten Commandments would that principle dictate ? Should we discard altogether the use of a brief summary of the elemental rules of morality and religion ? If we were to retain such a practice, should we formulate a wholly new and different set of injunctions, or should we accept the Decalogue just as it stands, and interpret it as it has been understood from the beginning ? Or should we, taking the existing Decalogue as our point

of departure, revise it verbally in parts and preserve others as they are, giving to them the old meaning? Or, while retaining some parts, should we re-interpret them? And if they are to be interpreted in the light of our new knowledge of psychology and of the social function of religion, what is the new meaning which they should be understood to possess, and which would prove of most service in training the people to the responsibilities and opportunities of democratic citizenship?

A study of the Decalogue in connection with the history and literature of the Old Testament reveals the fact that even in those ancient times it had been subjected to careful and persistent revision. In Leviticus, Exodus, and Deuteronomy are preserved to us three forms of it, representing as many stages in the evolution of Jewish religion. A comparison of them does not reveal the evolution to have been such as is generally supposed. Most writers have maintained that the development of the Old Testament message was from polytheism towards the idea of one infinite Creator of the universe. But if we take the successive forms of the Decalogue as illustrative, such is not the case. In the first place, in no one of them is there a word implying either that God is infinite or that he created man and nature out of nothing. But, in the second, if we compare the successive changes, we find that the crudest and earliest form of the Decalogue, which is preserved to us in the 34th chapter of Leviticus, is just as much and just as little monotheistic as the highest and latest. It begins, as do the other forms, with the commandments, "Thou shalt have no other god," and "Thou shalt make thee no molten image." These words, of course, in no wise imply philosophic monotheism.

What, however, we do discover, when the successive differences of the second and third forms are compared

with the first, is an increasing emphasis laid upon social justice, and a deeper insight into social justice as a factor in national religion. In the first form of the Decalogue there are no injunctions whatever to the effect that children should respect their parents, and that murder should not be committed, or adultery ; or that property should not be stolen, or false witness borne, or the possessions of others coveted. There is not a shadow of condemnation of what we ordinarily describe to-day as moral crimes. The last eight of the ten injunctions are devoted exclusively to details of ceremonial which in no wise imply an ethical character in the deity who commands them. As tabulated by Wellhausen, these eight are :—

The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep.
 Every firstling is mine.
 Thou shalt observe the feast of weeks,
 And the feast of ingathering at the year's end.
 Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven.
 The fat of my feast shall not be left over till the morning.
 The best of the first fruits of thy land shalt thou bring to
 the house of Yahwé thy God.
 Thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk.

What a significant contrast between such injunctions and those of the two later versions of the Decalogue ! Bold indeed must have been the Jewish statesmen and patriots who dared to discard altogether in a summary of the nation's religion these eight ceremonial injunctions, and in their place to introduce six that have nothing whatever to do with the rendering of formal homage to their God. From an ethical point of view, what a midnight of spiritual darkness still prevailed among the Jews when the chief interest of their religious teachers was absorbed in details which had no bearing whatever upon the fundamental duties of man to man ! What prevailed

was worse than a midnight darkness ; it was a mistaking of darkness for light. These eight injunctions not only excluded ethical commandments, but, being set up as the chief requirements of the nation's God, they challenged a deference and won an obedience wholly unmerited. They thus not only neglected, they distorted, inverted and perverted man's moral judgment. Whatever this God Yahwé might have been, two things are perfectly plain. Injunctions about not seething a kid in its mother's milk and the like could never have been represented as emanating from him had he been conceived as the infinite Creator of the universe ; still less, however, had he been identified with the power inherent in righteousness.

When we compare the second and third versions of the Decalogue with the first, we find that the Jewish people had evolved from midnight to the clear ethical dawn. And when we compare the second with the third, we feel that if the second version marks the dawn, the third heralds the forenoon of ethical religion. The writers of Deuteronomy, apparently having no other motive than national expediency, made bold to bring the Decalogue into line with the best moral judgment of their age ; and only when they had done this did they, in the reign of Josiah, allow the Book of the Law to be discovered in the Temple. But unhappily in the English Book of Common Prayer it is the second version—that of the 20th chapter of Exodus, and not that of the 5th of Deuteronomy—which has been accepted as the Ten Commandments ; it is a form which was already obsolescent among the Jews six hundred years before Christ. As compared with introducing into the Prayer Book either version of the Decalogue, the importance of choosing the Deuteronomic form would have seemed insignificant

at the time. Now, however, whenever the Prayer Book is revised, the substitution of this in place of the Exodic form would be an incalculable ethical gain.

The moral differences are seen in the fourth and tenth commandments. In Exodus the fourth had stood :—

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work : but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God : in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates ; *for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day : wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.*

The revisers in the time of Josiah struck out the fantastic, mythological, supernaturalistic reason here given for keeping the seventh day holy. They made the commandment read :—

Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work : but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God : in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates ; *that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched-out arm : therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.*

They had found better reasons for sabbath observance than that in six days the Lord made heaven and earth and rested the seventh. They could never have dropped this reason had it not ceased to be to them convincing. But it had ceased to be so, because they had found deeper

foundations for the observance of the sabbath. These they discovered in national expediency and universal humanity. The day was now to be kept for the purposes of education in the nation's upward history and for discipline in humility, and out of considerateness and kindness to working men and beasts of burden. Is it not veritably a difference from dawn, if not from midnight, to noonday, through which the Jew had passed from the time when he kept the sabbath because the Creator had rested after making heaven and earth, and now, when his God enjoins him to keep it in order that menservants and maidservants might rest as well as their masters? Now masters were to remember that they also had once been servants and that they had once been delivered from slavery. From gratitude and humility, as well as from a sense of human tenderness and responsibility, they were to keep the day of rest.

If philosophic monotheism means the recognition of the power one worships as the Creator of heaven and earth, then the 20th chapter of Exodus is more monotheistic than that in Deuteronomy. For the writers of Deuteronomy struck out the only passage which could have been interpreted as cosmic theism, and inserted in its place an absolutely humanistic and social reason for observing the day of the Lord their God. This comparison between the two Old Testament versions of the fourth commandment must convince everybody who appreciates the national responsibility of the Anglican Church as a moral educator that at least the Deuteronomic version must replace that of Exodus in the Prayer Book.

A similar minimum of revision is required in the tenth commandment. The version from Exodus which the Prayer Book sanctions reads, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's

wife, nor his manservant,” and then goes on to enumerate other labourers. Here is a survival of primitive and semi-barbarous ideas. Covetousness is made to cover an unrestrained craving of the reproductive instinct as well as an anti-social desire to own the property of others and control other human beings as wealth-producers. Such a grouping together implies that women are the legal and rightful property of men ; only on this presupposition could the wife have been classed in the tenth commandment among possessions and servants as a part of the house. It is assumed that the husband owns the household, and through it the wife. But as far back as in the days of Deuteronomy, Jewish statesmen had outgrown this primitive point of view. Accordingly they revised the tenth commandment, and put it in a form which places the wife apart and in a category distinct from that of household goods. The Deuteronomic version runs, “Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour’s wife ; neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour’s house”—and then proceeds to specify details of property.

Perhaps the Deuteronomic version of the fourth and tenth commandments would have been adopted by those who constructed the Anglican Prayer Book if their work had not been done hurriedly and under pressure of a great political uncertainty—not to say personal danger. Yet one cannot help fearing that no such ethical evolution had been going on in the reign of Henry VIII. as regards respect for working people and for women as must have been undoubtedly taking place in that of King Josiah. But however much we may have reason to regret the low standard of English morals in the sixteenth century on these two points, there can be no doubt that now for a century England has been leading the world to a new recognition of the moral personality of women and of all

labourers. And this new insight must soon lead at the least to substituting for the Ten Words of Exodus those of Deuteronomy.

Let us then consider the fitness of the Deuteronomic Decalogue as a summary of the elements of ethical religion. This version embodies the teaching of the prophets of the eighth and seventh centuries before Christ. It is the garnered fruit of the labours of Amos, Isaiah, Micah and Hosea, who gave the ethical trend to politics, patriotism and religion. Especially in Micah, who lived about a century before the publication of Deuteronomy, do we find the teachings which inspired the great ethical movement of the seventh century. The Ten Commandments as they appear in the 5th chapter of Deuteronomy are but an aphoristic formulation of the spirit of such a passage as this in Micah :—

Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? The voice of the Lord crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom will see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it. Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure that is abominable? Shall I be pure with wicked balances, and with a bag of deceitful weights?

What a spiritual revolution, achieved through a process of moral agitation, from the injunction that a kid shall not be seethed in its mother's milk to the identification of humility before one's God with not cheating in trade, and

with making restitution by returning ill-gotten goods to the rightful owner !

There have been unfriendly critics of the Old Testament who have maintained that where it speaks of mercy and justice it does not mean what we to-day would understand by mercy and justice. But this typical passage from Micah proves beyond all doubt that doing justly and loving mercy, yes, and walking humbly with one's God, meant to the editors, compilers and political promulgators of the Book of the Law nothing other than fair dealing in even the obscurest transactions between man and man.

Thus in the revision made by the Old Testament writers themselves we find not only an example to justify any nation at any time in bringing its traditional religious documents up to the social conscience of the hour, but also the very principle which ought to guide England to-day in the re-casting of her manual of Church services. May we not follow the example of revision here set ?

But before attempting to gauge the moral worth of the various commandments in detail, let us turn first to the ceremonial setting in which they are presented in the Prayer Book, and then to the form of the commandments as such.

Our chief concern here is not the Decalogue in its Bible context, but in that of the Book of Common Prayer. In the Prayer Book, the immediate setting of the commandments consists of the responses of the people after each commandment spoken by the priest. This is one of the most beautiful ceremonies in the whole of the Church service ; but is it also one which will survive a revision of the form and an amendment of the matter of the commandments themselves in the direction of science and social democracy ?

The old significance of responses by the laity to

utterances of the priest is inconsistent with the new priesthood of the people ; yet the old form is an equally suitable expression of the relation of the laity to the chosen and democratically elected mouthpiece and organ of the community as a whole. It is fitting that the official representative of the people at large should utter those statements which poetic imagination has put into the mouth of the community as if emanating from its unified will. If it be the nation in its ideal trend that utters all ethical imperatives—as I shall attempt later to prove—then to a minister appointed to represent society as a whole must inevitably fall the task of declaring them.

Equally fitting is it that the people severally should join in the response ; for the commandments—as I shall have occasion to emphasise—are addressed to the various members of society, each in his individual responsibility. It is the individual who shall honour his own father and mother, and not murder, nor violate the marriage bond, nor steal, nor bear false witness, nor covet. On this account, nothing could be more dramatic or searching in the whole of religious ritual than this form of speaking and responding to the ten elemental words of the moral life.

Nor could the substance of the thing said by the people be improved upon. The repetition of the same phrase after each of the first nine commandments, “ Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law,” is a wonderful means of expressing the singleness of moral aspiration in the midst of the manifold duties enjoined. The slight change of form after the tenth commandment—“ Lord, have mercy upon us, and write all these thy laws in our hearts, we beseech thee ”—finely indicates the finish without expressly announcing it.

It may be true that the words “ Lord, have mercy

upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law,” have been heretofore addressed to a transcendent deity, but they are by no means incapable of a humanistic application. All the beneficent influences and ethical agencies operative within society under natural law may be appealed to in these terms. What more appropriate language could be chosen? The supplication now becomes a poetic figure—entirely fitting, because, instead of exceeding, it falls short of our intense consciousness of the ever-present and instreaming powers under natural law, but outside of the individual himself, that make for righteousness. These influences and agencies are verily the Lord and Master of him who sincerely opens his spirit to their control, identifying their direction with the secret bent of his inmost will.

In regard to the form of the commandments as such, there are three questions to be considered. First, the commandments are brief summaries of ethical discipline; but shall the educator of the future make such conspicuous use of condensed formulæ as has been the custom of all good teachers in the past, in every department of instruction? Secondly, the commandments are sentences in the imperative mood; but are such appropriate to a democratic, scientific and ethical church service—would they reinforce the upward trend and the conscious moral demand of England to-day? Who is there, if we exclude superhuman agencies, that can rightly, and will be allowed to, issue categorical orders? Is there or is there not a supernaturalistic implication inevitable in the very forms “Thou shalt” and “Thou shalt not”? If we to-day are to turn our moral trust from supernatural beings to human wisdom and human goodness, would it or would it not be a forced poetic licence to represent these moral attributes of man’s personality as issuing decrees? And if

in our scheme of redemption neither superhuman agencies nor merely abstract qualities of character are to be represented as literally uttering commandments, what power still remains to us which can do so? The third question to be answered is not concerning the one who issues the commandments, but supplements the first by asking, Who is the person commanded? Unless summaries and the use of the imperative mood are justifiable educationally and sociologically, commandments cannot be admitted into a national ritual of the moral life.

As regards the resort to brief summations of knowledge and wisdom, I must refer my readers to books which treat of general pedagogical methods and practice. The justification which they will there find for the use of summaries in teaching any other department of science or art applies equally to the case of instruction in social justice. The Church's practice in its repetitions of the commandments is wholly in harmony with the principles of pedagogy. We may therefore assume that on this ground at least there can be no objection to a continuation of it.

As to the use of the imperative mood, who is there, in a naturalistic scheme of national culture, to issue an ethical commandment? The failure to see that the source of unconditional ethical sovereignty remains intact although all supernaturalism is discarded, is a proof that the common sense of men has been blinded by the old-fashioned interpretation of our deeper moral life. For in very fact there does exist a mighty Will over and above, and yet consisting of, each individual will in human society, and it unceasingly and categorically declares "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not." The General Will of the Ideal Community as the vital principle of the actual community formulates and executes

laws by public opinion, through social customs and political governments.

Some may challenge the existence of the will of the whole community, or at least its efficiency in making itself manifest. But, without entering into the philosophy of the State, I may presuppose that my reader accepts the view generally recognised by political thinkers. These maintain that the State consists of those persons in the nation who in their consciousness are aware of the ideal trend of the nation's history, and who in their rational will are possessed with a self-sacrificing desire to advance the general welfare of the nation. Now, this consciousness and will may exist only in the personality of one man, or a small class or minority, or in a majority, or in all persons who have been born into and are reared under the influence of the nation's organic life. However many or few they be, those persons who bear the national consciousness prove that they do so by actual participation in moulding the destiny of the nation. And it may be maintained that in the rough and in the long run they voice the real need of the nation's life, and therefore give effective expression to the essential will of the community.

Now, it may well be that the infinite Creator of the universe never promulgated the Ten Commandments. But no one can deny that the statesmen and lawgivers of the Jewish tribe did so ; and, beyond all question, the commandments emanated from the politically organised will of the Jewish community. One may possibly doubt the existence of an intelligent Governor of the universe ; and then one cannot believe that he ever declared to mortals that they should not steal or bear false witness. But no one has ever questioned the fact that the Jewish people itself, through its legislators, did so declare. It

is quite clear that the Will which issued these laws was that of the nation, not merely at the instant when the Decalogue was promulgated, but through growing ages. Indeed, in Deuteronomy the context of the Ten Commandments overtly appeals to the historic sense of the community by a reference to the great event of the people's deliverance, ages back, "out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." The idealistic trend of the tribe as a growing nation through centuries crystallised itself in these words, and through them brought to bear the sanction of its authority upon each living member of the race, binding him in loyalty to itself, and exacting of him obedience and service.

If, then, it be true that always and everywhere the Ideal Will of any society more or less constrains the will of the individual members, and that the welfare of the community is the higher law for the individual, the imperative mood is more than a poetic licence. It is a necessity of political speech, as the expression of the actual pressure of the Community as an Ideal and a fact upon the individual. It is the only means of conveying in words the binding authority of the community over each of its members. As compilers, therefore, of the nation's manual of ethical religion, we shall, by the nature of our task, find ourselves constrained to retain the imperative mood if the authority of the moral code of the community is to be indicated in summary form.

Although it is Righteousness, Duty, the Moral Law, which issues the decrees, it is not Duty as an abstraction, not Righteousness removed from the effective energies of human society. It is the Moral Law teeming and tingling with a nation's life, pushing and driving forward the individual will under the pressure of public opinion and political sanctions.

In the Ten Commandments themselves the actual will of the community is not given authority irrespective of whether the community be right or wrong in its positive demands. It does not seek to constrain by attaching extraneous sanctions of legal rewards and punishments. The actual will is recognised only so far as it makes for the weal of the community. It is therefore only the ideal community which speaks. The Ten Commandments appeal to each individual's own moral judgment. This makes them pedagogically and ethically justifiable, since each human being always has latent or active within him the ideal will of the community to which he belongs. His intuition is the ideal of the surrounding society alive within his inmost personality, and it is for him rightfully the final court of appeal as to what the true injunctions of the general will may be. This general will is undoubtedly for each individual an outside will—outside of his whims—and therefore it may command him; but it is also his inner ideal, his higher nature, his tribal self, the essence of his moral personality.

I have already indicated incidentally who it is that is commanded to obey in the Decalogue, and need dwell further on this point only for a moment. I have thrown this question into prominence only in order to call attention to the fact that it is not the community as a whole that is appealed to, but each individual member; and my object in calling attention to this point is in order, when I come to speak of the Lord's Prayer, to make more vivid the contrast between it and the commandments. For, as I read the former, its implication is that it emanates from those very centres, individual and multitudinous, of spiritual activity towards which the Decalogue is directed. In the commandments the point of sovereignty—as I shall

reiterate—is the community ; in the Lord's Prayer it is the individuals.

Granting, then, that the imperative form is consistent with such national idealism as we are attempting here to incorporate into a manual of religious services, we may turn to consider how much of the actual material contained in the Ten Commandments of Deuteronomy is of enduring and supreme value.

For this purpose it may be well to divide the ten into two groups, at the point suggested by the division of them implied in Christ's summation of the Law. Alluding to the first four, and indeed quoting from the 6th chapter of Deuteronomy (v. 5), Christ declared that the first and great commandment was to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might. Fusing into one the last six, and taking the very words from the 18th verse of the 19th chapter of Leviticus, he declared that the second commandment was to love thy neighbour as thyself. He further asserted that on these two hang all the Law and the Prophets.

The first four thus grouped together are generally regarded as purely theological. By this is meant that they are supernaturalistic, that they enjoin the worship of an intelligent agency other than man. It is therefore inferred that for anyone who has ceased to believe in a personal Creator of the universe they can have no longer any import. In contrast to them, it is generally maintained that the remaining six commandments are purely moral, human and naturalistic. The first group are said to treat of Jehovah-worship, the second of neighbour-love.

But, upon closer examination, it will be found that the first four commandments are not to be disposed of so easily. They may be theological, in the sense that they treat of worship and of a God to be worshipped ; but they

are not necessarily supernaturalistic. For the question confronts us here whether the God of which they speak may not be some factor wholly within the realm of verifiable experience, and within the hierarchy of human goods.

Let us consider what the first four commandments would mean in the light of the closing lines of Matthew Arnold's sonnet entitled “The Divinity.” Arnold says—

*God's wisdom and God's goodness !—aye, but fools
Misdefine these till God knows them no more ;
Wisdom and goodness, they are God ! What schools
Have yet so much as heard this simpler lore ?
This no saint teaches and this no church rules ;
'Tis in the desert now and heretofore.*

The problem before us is whether the first four commandments survive the shifting of our point of view from the notion of God as the personal Creator of the universe to the idea of God as human wisdom and human goodness.

Still further, we must, wholly on grounds of national and world-wide social expediency, decide what reality Englishmen to-day ought to worship. Having thus decided, we must attempt to bring the nation's language and forms of devotion into agreement with our convictions.

Before we can judge as to the political propriety of discarding the commandment “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God,” we must find out, on the basis of our own independent moral experience, whether the commandment “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” covers the whole sphere of ethical law. Many persons in our day who have rejected supernaturalism have set up this one commandment as embracing the whole of morality and religion. But I ask : Does it embrace the whole sphere of duty ? Is it even the first and great commandment ? Or is it, as Christ said, only the second ? And if it be

but second, what is to be our first? And when we have found that, into what subdivisions will it fall?

We shall, I believe, upon reflection, come to the conclusion that the whole of the moral law is by no means contained under the conception of love to one's neighbour. Indeed, we shall find that that very love itself receives its dignity from being subject to a commandment which binds us to something higher than an individual person. The ethical life is deeper and its discipline more organic than mere kindness or affection for other individual mortals. We must not only love men, but the Ideal latent in men; we must not only love men, but love Justice, as the standard of relationship that should hold among them; we must not only love men, but must love Love. Not only our neighbour must be cherished, but Righteousness must be revered as the spiritual bond of man to man. Less tender perhaps, possibly less gentle than devotion to individual persons, is this devotion to the Moral Law itself; but it is more binding and inexorable, more sublime and awful. If, now, Christ meant Righteousness when he spoke of the Lord thy God, if he meant Righteousness worshipped as the sovereign reality of life, we must assent to his declaration that the first and great commandment is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might." Indeed, whether he actually meant this or not, and whether the ancient prophets before him meant it or not, is in purely ethical religion a matter of subordinate importance. If *we* mean it, and know well *why* we mean it, that is sufficient. Those of us who would teach faith in morality, and would attempt to destroy as an illusion the belief that anything else can deliver man, must declare that to love Righteousness with utter singleness of mind will for ever remain the great commandment. In a universal code of

religious morality, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” is only a derivative injunction. Only under Principle—that is, never forgetting the universal relationships of social justice—mayest thou love thy neighbour as thyself. The double commandment “Thou shalt love Goodness as thy God and thy neighbour as thyself” constitutes one perfect whole. On it hangs the entire sanity of politics and history. The second part, though derived, is in substance the same as the first. Love to one’s neighbour refines by individualising the love of righteousness, and the love of righteousness steadies, dignifies and preserves neighbour-love.

An analysis of ethical experience and an independent interpretation of the Ten Commandments in the light of social and psychological principles, while preserving to us the distinction made by Christ between the first four and the last six of the Ten Commandments, yet expose to view a homogeneity of character throughout the whole of the Decalogue which was altogether obscured under the supernaturalistic interpretation. According to that, the first four commandments inculcate the worship of an intelligent Maker and Governor of the universe; then, beginning with the fifth commandment, the point of view is shifted to another plane. The commandments suddenly become purely social and humanistic, historical and moral. It is hard to see why, all at once, the intelligent and infinite Creator of the universe, after exacting homage to himself, should become equally concerned that children should honour their parents, and that no one should steal, murder, covet, and the like. But if it is nothing other than the ideal will of the community itself which is the “I” speaking and the “me” to whom homage is exacted in the first four commandments, nothing could be more perfectly of one

piece than the Ten Commandments are, despite the difference between the first four and the last six Words. The Decalogue is now seen to possess from beginning to end a psychological, a political and a religious—not to mention a literary—unity.

The harmony and proportion, the symmetry and consistency of meaning thus brought to view, are too nearly perfect to have originated in a fanciful and arbitrary interpretation. An interpretation must commend itself to us which discloses such interdependence and naturalness of meaning. It is impossible to escape the belief that the higher will of the community was not only the power actually guiding the judgment of the Jewish statesmen, but was also the reality which they worshipped as the Lord their God. No explanation, if it were not true, could reveal such mutual support of parts in any document. On this ground we are justified in maintaining that the being of whom the first four commandments enjoin the worship is none other than Wisdom and Goodness. But whether they were the God of the ancient Jews or not is of no primary significance; the question for us is: Shall we make Wisdom and Goodness our God? If we do, we as a nation are face to face with the same problem which confronted the writers of Deuteronomy. Shall we promulgate to the people of the land that they shall love wisdom and goodness with all their heart and with all their soul and with all their might? And shall we not, moreover, proceed to subdivide this general commandment as the exigencies of our day require?

1. Shall the Ten Commandments of the future—if we are to retain such a summary of morality and religion—begin with the statement “I am the Lord thy God: thou shalt have none other gods before me”?

This statement is not self-illuminating as to the identity of the "I" who is represented as issuing the commandment. Although we waive for the moment who or what it is that speaks, the commandment still says something very definite. It says that the power speaking is the Lord God of the person spoken to. This can mean nothing else than that the power speaking is the source of the supreme blessings of life to each person addressed, and, on grounds of national expediency, should receive steadfast obedience and reverence. The sentence "I am the Lord thy God" might be paraphrased into "I am the being by obeying and reverencing whom thou shalt receive the highest benefits." As there probably would be no dispute as to this interpretation, we may turn to note that it would have been perfectly possible for the framers of the commandment to have introduced a clause in apposition with the first personal pronoun, which would for ever have put beyond all question who the person was that issued the command. If, for instance, the author of the Decalogue meant to represent the moral and intelligent Governor of the universe as speaking, it would have been no sacrifice of aphoristic brevity to have introduced words to that effect. The first clause might have stood, "I, the intelligent and moral Governor of the universe, am the Lord thy God," or "I, the infinite personal Creator of the universe, am the Lord thy God," or "I, the infinite supernatural agency who created the world out of nothing, am the Lord thy God." Unfortunately, or fortunately, no such specification to point unequivocally to the being designated by the word "God" appears in the Ten Commandments, or anywhere else throughout the Old or New Testament. We are left to our own resources to discover what factor in experience the word God indicates. The writers of the Bible somehow assumed

that readers would know what reality was meant. But such has been far from the case.

Scholars are more and more coming to the conclusion, however, that there is no adequate justification for the notion that the Jews meant by the word "God" an infinite Creator of the universe, or a moral and intelligent Governor of all things. More and more they are coming to recognise that the word points to *the Ideal of Social Justice as the constructive principle of human society*, and therefore as a living, creative reality within verifiable experience.

Those whose study of the Bible has led them to this conclusion—if to them the question were submitted as to what clause in apposition with the first personal pronoun should be introduced in this commandment—might urge that it should read, "I, the Principle of Social Justice, am the Lord thy God." Of course, the exact wording is not the point for which I am contending. The clause might read, "I, the Social Conscience," or "I, the Moral Ideal," or "I, the Good in Man," or "I, the Cause of the Good in the world, am the Lord thy God."

It may be well also to observe that the form of commandment might still be retained although the being called God were not represented as speaking in the first person. God might be referred to or spoken about. Thus, instead of saying "I am the Lord thy God," it would have been possible to introduce the commandments by saying, "The personal Creator of the universe is the Lord thy God : thou shalt have none other gods before him." The remaining nine commandments might have been cast in similar fashion. Indeed, it would be possible for any nation to-day formulating new commandments or re-casting old ones to give them this shape.

Those who did not believe that the world was created out of nothing by a supernatural personal agency would

naturally protest against the formula, "The personal Creator of the world is the Lord thy God." Those who believed as Matthew Arnold did would say something to this effect: "The Ideal of Social Justice as the formative principle of human society is the Lord thy God: thou shalt have none other gods before it." And all the rest of the commandments could be so re-shaped that some such phrase as the Moral Ideal, or the Good in the world, or Duty, or the Moral Law, or the Vision of the Perfect City, could be introduced at various points in such a way as to put beyond all doubt what was meant by "the Lord thy God."

If, however, the being who is set up as a God is not to be represented as speaking in the first person, a difficulty arises which is not merely verbal. For who, then, is it that issues the commandment "Thou shalt have none other gods before the Ideal of Social Justice"? The power or person who issues the command must be the supreme and final authority, the sovereign whose sanction is the chief credential to the dignity and efficacy of the commandment. Who, then, is it who presumes to order me to worship the Moral Ideal as my God? If it be something else or somebody else than the Moral Ideal itself, there is a divided authority. The person issuing the commandment either sets himself above the God whose worship he commands, or else he speaks only in the name of the God. We may set aside as morally impossible that he should elevate himself as an authority superior to the God which he commands to be worshipped. There only remains, then, that the power issuing the commandment speaks on behalf of and in the name of the God who commands. If this be so, it is then after all the God who speaks, and the first person would be the only appropriate form of expression. The command-

ment must mean, "Thou shalt have none other gods before me, who am the Ideal of Social Justice, the formative principle of human society."

It is true, as I have said, that in the Ten Commandments the community itself, through its recognised law-givers, issued the injunctions; but, as I have also indicated, the actual community is evidently speaking on behalf of the ideal community, which it recognises as the regulative authority at the heart of its positive laws and statutes. It is not the community right or wrong, but the community right who issues the decrees. I may assume, then, that my reader agrees with me that the first personal pronoun, indicating the final authority from which the commandment emanates, and from which it derives its moral weight and dignity, should be retained. The only question remaining is whether this commandment should contain a clause in apposition with the first personal pronoun, to indicate unequivocally the power which is represented as speaking. There is little objection to the introduction of such a clause; but my own judgment is that there is no educational ground for the innovation. The commandments must always be taught to the young and to the ignorant by teachers who know far more about them than the summary itself could disclose. The teacher must explain the commandments, no matter how self-illuminating they may be. It would be perfectly possible, for instance, for the mother or father, or teacher or priest, when the child is committing the first commandment to memory, to tell him that whenever in his heart he wants to do right and to be good, that is God, and that this desire to do right is represented in the commandment as saying, "I am the Lord thy God." As the child grows in understanding and in moral experience he will

know more and more the full power and scope and reality of goodness and wisdom. If he is thus instructed, there will be no possibility of his ever forgetting what his God is. Nor will the reasonableness of the commandment elude his youthful judgment. We may therefore safely retain the first person to indicate that God himself issues the commandments, without introducing an explanatory clause in apposition with the pronoun.

We must remember that no summary of moral and religious duties could in any case be wholly self-illuminating. A summary always presupposes the instructor at hand. What is more, a commandment, being made clear by the teacher, takes a more powerful hold upon the constructive imagination when no attempt is made in the formula itself to explain its own reference. It leaves much to the experience and previous education of its public. It trusts to its own suggestiveness to supply what it does not overtly announce. Indeed, we may well insist that, had not pedants and self-interested religionists, for purposes and vanities of their own, read metaphysical meanings into the Bible as a whole, and into the Ten Commandments in particular, there would have been no great misunderstanding of its message. Among simple folk there never has been a great misunderstanding; they have identified God with the good in the world, because the commandments associate him so intimately with respect for home, property, life, truthfulness and marriage. Let us then keep the first personal pronoun, and trust to the teacher and to the native wit of the guileless to bring home to the people that Goodness is the God who speaks.

I have, in another volume,¹ met many objections to

¹ *National Idealism and a State Church* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1907).

the notion that an abstraction like morality should be worshipped as God ; I will here, therefore, only remind my reader that it is wholly consonant with literary usage, and that it is psychologically natural, for man to represent abstract moral qualities as speaking to him. If I seem to propose a tasteless innovation, it must be remembered that to the unthinking all innovations seem so.

Such qualities as virtue, although "abstract," are realities. Moral ideas are powers and energies in human life. They constitute together a sublime and awful presence, which in moments of spiritual illumination is felt with overpowering vividness. Poetic imagination is little else than a way of realising intellectually this emotional sense of the reality, nearness, and potency of ideas and principles. To speak to them and to let them speak to us is wholly justifiable when righteousness is felt to have the spiritual attraction of a personal friend with whom one stands in intimate and vital communion. To interpret the first commandment as meaning "Thou shalt have none other gods before Righteousness" will seem insipid and tasteless only to those to whom—and there are such—morality is, after all, but a figment of conventional propriety or a dictate of tyrants. To allow righteousness to speak through our imagination in its own person is to give relief and scope to conscience, which suffers too much imprisonment. We are justified, then, in counting a distaste for an ethical interpretation of the first commandment as evidence of reflective immaturity.

As part of a scheme of moral education, the setting up of Duty as an object of reverence, which the first commandment, when ethically interpreted, enjoins, is so important from the point of view of national expediency that it can scarcely be over-estimated. The State must devise means of fixing duty in the centre of the people's

voluntary attention. The first commandment, when embodied in the national ritual, is one such means. It is one which cannot fail to receive the respect of every educator and every wise legislator. The object of education is to build the State upon inner foundations eternal in the reason and social circumstance of man. Nation-builders must resort to all ways consistent with the end in view of making men love social justice. Such love will not come of itself ; it requires nurture, and the nurture presupposes discipline, and the discipline must come from the systematic effort of teachers and statesmen. Without such effort, a people is sure to go astray from the path which leads to sobriety and efficiency in social service ; for the routine of business, the cares of life, tend to crowd out all thought of the higher interests of mankind. They are liable to bury out of sight the knowledge of the great past of humanity, and to make us forget the ideal destinies of the human race and the inner satisfactions of a life spent in the furtherance of these destinies. Political genius, therefore, must invent means to offset the dead weight, not only of momentary impulse and passion, but of sordid cares and petty personal vanities. Such an invention is the reiteration of the first commandment by the people of a nation. The leaders of Israel pushed to the forefront of their political and educational policy the setting up of social duty as the nation's God.

We often marvel at the unique vitality which the Jewish race has shown for three thousand years. Yet that vitality is itself chiefly a product of the statesmanship of the ancient Jewish patriots. It was Judaism as a scheme of ethical culture which became the moulding influence of the people. That scheme introduced into the mind of every Jew from early childhood ideas which acted towards his self-preserva-

tion and the preservation of his race in a social environment almost wholly unfavourable and unfriendly. Except for their religious teachings, the Jews, no matter what natural gifts they may have possessed, must have succumbed ages ago. Their unique vitality is beyond all doubt due to the fact that their leaders nearly three thousand years ago set up the elements of social morality as the only God who would deliver them as a people, and give them long life, health and ultimate prosperity.

Except for this insight and foresight of its statesmen, it is a question whether the Hebrew race was pre-eminent over its neighbours either in physique or intellect. It certainly was not pre-eminent in spontaneous moral quality. The ethical character of its religion was not a spontaneous, effortless growth. Only the insistent instruction compelled by the religious statesmen taught the people to regard personal and social morality as the first requisite for length and strength of life. It will escape no close student of the Ten Commandments in particular, or of the whole of the Old Testament, that righteousness is not set up in the Jewish religion as an end in itself, unrelated to national and domestic consequences. On the contrary, the statesmen, prophets and teachers constantly give as the whole motive for the duties laid down, to lengthen life and prevent calamity from falling upon the children and the children's children for generations to come. The experienced leaders of the Jews had evidently had reasons for forcing upon the people again and again the importance of self-restraint, mercifulness, strict integrity and scrupulous justice. In the commandment "Thou shalt have none other gods before me," we see the wise strenuousness of the remnant of the righteous attempting to communicate itself to the whole nation.

For England to-day it is as necessary as it was for the

Jewish race seven hundred years before Christ to insist upon the pre-eminent claim of righteousness over other objects of nature and other impulses of the human heart which clamour for attention. There is as much competition to-day between the moral sentiment and other energies and aspects of experience which allure us as ever there was, although these aspects may long ago have been banished from formal worship in our religious cults. And it is as much as ever of the very nature of Duty to allow no competitor with itself for the supreme reverence of the heart. There is infinite reason why Duty as a God should continue to be declared a jealous God. Thousands of splendid potencies and pleasures of appetite and eye obtrude themselves upon the innocent and upon the undisciplined imagination and clamour for homage. They allure the heart of man into devious ways ; they offer intense delights and immense rewards. The blessings of justice and mercy, on the other hand, although deeper and more abiding, are less assertive and aggressive. The beauty of holiness is not so dazzling as the splendour of light and wine ; its strength is quieter and less insistent than the impulses of appetite. Such being the case, there is little hope or chance for the supremacy of wisdom and goodness unless these be systematically singled out and lifted up above all other goods, and unless they be guarded by parents, teachers, poets, judges and lawgivers against the insidious deification of self and the usurpation of the world and the flesh.

There is a foolish notion prevalent that the difference between the God of the Jews and the gods of the surrounding tribes consisted in the fact that the God of the Jews was a real being, while the gods of the other tribes were merely fictitious creations of superstitious fancy. This notion emanates from the supernaturalists, who look

upon the gods both of the Jewish and the other tribes as being necessarily personal agencies, outside of human society and beyond nature. They do not believe that any such personal agencies as Baal, Moloch and Ashtoreth existed. They do believe, however, in the existence of one supernatural agent whom, in their opinion, the Jews worshipped under the name of Yahwé. The truly psychological and scientific statement of the case is, however, that both the Jews and the neighbouring tribes worshipped real, natural, human forces as gods. The Jews ultimately worshipped exclusively the moral sentiment; while the other tribes worshipped, if not the quickening energies of animal and vegetable life, some other material sources of benefit to man. It has been often observed that the Ten Commandments do not declare that the other deities do not exist, but simply that they must not be worshipped. In not denying their existence, the Ten Commandments are strictly in the order of science. The meaning of the first commandment was, "Thou shalt set up no other instinct or impulse and no physical source of human blessings before the dictates of conscience as thy God."

That men do to-day set up other sources of gratification than conscience and other springs of blessing than Duty itself as the objects of reverence, no one will deny. Nor will anyone who understands the workings of human nature fail to see that such preference for lower satisfactions and for the sources of less precious benefits is the cause of infinite mischief to nations.

2. The second commandment is something more than a special application and elaboration of the first. The injunction "Thou shalt have none other gods before me" does not even allude to material symbols or their worship in a systematic cult. Yet the worship of such symbols

is the theme of the second commandment : “Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, nor in the earth beneath, nor in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down to them nor worship them. For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto thousands in them that love me and keep my commandments.”

It has been maintained that the reason why images are forbidden is because of the invisibility of the Creator of the universe. But had the God of the Jews been, as Matthew Arnold maintained, the principle of social righteousness as a real factor in life, there would have been a still more cogent reason for forbidding graven images. If the prophets meant to set up a personal agency who fashioned the world as a man might make a watch, there would be some justification in making him in the image of a human being, with face and hands and bodily parts. But if their God was Righteousness, an invisible, spiritual principle within and between the souls of men themselves, images would be felt to be preposterous and misleading. There is no doubt that the human face itself reflects wisdom and goodness where these control a man's every act ; but the more one is aware of the social nature of morality and of the consequent inability of any individual to reflect its full majesty and meaning, the more one realises the inadequacy of material images as symbols of the moral ideal.

Thanks, however, to the Old Testament teaching, the religion of the West has outgrown the worship of idols. The specific meaning of the second commandment, therefore, renders it practically obsolete ; at least it has no bearing in the modern life of Christian peoples. One

cannot say that even the Roman Catholic use of images is of the nature condemned in the Decalogue. But, while ceremonial worship of idols is not a danger to the English nation, there is national occasion to prohibit by ethical commandment the inward worship of real but evil gods—those interests and appetites of which the tribes round about Israel made images. If religion has grown more inward, it is also true that all sins and wickednesses have grown more inward. What are the real gods which compete to-day with wisdom and goodness for homage and obedience? Clearly the answer is: pleasure, wealth, station, outward gain. But there is also a wholly different type of false gods in vogue, even within the ceremonial cult of systematic religion to-day in the West. There is, it is true, no worship of stocks and stones made into the image of anything in the heavens above or on the earth; but many beings and powers are worshipped within the soul and in formal ceremonial, not simply as embodiments of the ideal of human goodness, but because of attributes which are morally adventitious. For instance, the Creator of the universe himself, in so far as he is worshipped on account of his power to annihilate or to inflict extraneous punishment, is a case in point. In current religion, the Creator is an intellectual symbol of power and of nature, as well as of goodness. Likewise the worship of the Virgin Mary because she may intercede with another that he forgive us our sins, is not a religious practice which an enlightened conscience can sanction; it never can be the chief solicitude of a being with a moral nature that another, though it be his creator or saviour, shall forgive him; his supreme concern must always be that he shall stand unblamed in the chaste sight of the universal conscience within himself. He will then be quite sure—but not raised to ecstasy by the thought—that he stands

unblamed in the eye of every other agent with moral insight. I need not specify further, for my reader can easily discover for himself, how much of modern religious thought and ceremonial, how much of prayer, and how far the present-day sacraments should be forbidden in a wise national Decalogue.

The first part of the second commandment, if it is to overthrow modern idols and real but false gods, must cover this thought : “Thou shalt not make a god of pleasure, wealth, station, or any outward gain ; neither shalt thou worship any Being, however powerful, except for its human wisdom and goodness.”

Unhappily, as the world tends to-day, it seems probable that for some thousands of years to come the second commandment, thus revised, will not have outlived the need for its constant inculcation.

The last sentence of the second commandment gives expression to two reasons for not worshipping any other Power than the God of the prophets—the jealousy of their God, and the suffering of the children of those who hate him. If the purely ethical interpretation of God be fanciful and false, it is wonderful both that Righteousness would be the only God which was morally justified in brooking no rival, and that in the very nature of things children must suffer for the inattention of parents to uprightness. Re-formulated and brought to fit modern circumstances, the latter half of the second commandment might read, “For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting through transmission of blood, through the teaching and example of parents and by public opinion, the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and in all these ways showing mercy unto thousands in them that love me and keep my commandments.”

The insertion of the phrase "through transmission of blood, through the teaching and example of parents and by public opinion," is such an amendment of the old formulæ of religion as the science of our age requires. Indeed, there is a party in the Church of England to-day crying out for the right of the Church to re-state her creeds ; and one of the points they specify is this very reference in the second commandment to the visiting of the sins of the fathers upon the children. The old statement is open to the interpretation that some superhuman agency, arbitrarily if not maliciously, in anger if not in spite, punishes children for the wrongdoing of parents. Such an interpretation is demoralising, and has rightly been resented. But when it is given up, there is only the more occasion for repeatedly calling attention to the danger of deterioration by physical inheritance, to the contagion and infection of sin and the evil consequences of close contact with persons of corrupt life.

If we now bring together the two parts of the second commandment as we have amended it, it will read thus : "Thou shalt not make a god of pleasure, wealth, station, or any outward gain ; neither shalt thou worship any Being, however powerful, except for its human wisdom and goodness ; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting through transmission of blood, through the teaching and example of parents and by public opinion, the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and in all these ways showing mercy unto thousands in them that love me and keep my commandments." If one will place this amended form side by side with that which has come down to us from the seventh century B.C., one can the better judge which, as an instrument of ethical teaching and of character-building, would prove the more

efficient. Nor can anyone deny that if the amended form would prove the better instrument, no sentimental desire to conserve the old for the mere sake of its antiquity should stand in the way of its displacement. If, however, the prevalent intelligence of the nation is not at present equal to such a change in its manual of religious rites, at least, in explanation, teachers and preachers might introduce the amended statement—as a modern equivalent of what undoubtedly the Hebrew lawgivers meant.

3. The third commandment of the Decalogue shows a still closer and a still finer application to religion of national utility as a motive, than do the first and second. In it the lawgiver recognises as a menace to the State the proneness of men to degrade an object of reverence by flippant or violent speech concerning it, and he arms his nation against this danger by a special prohibition. He sees that it is not enough to insist that righteousness must be by a general commandment assigned the first place in the imagination and sentiment of the people; nor is the safeguard adequate, when he has expressly warned them against the worship of competing deities, and has pointed out the curse which inevitably falls upon the children of the evil-doer. He goes further, and forbids insincere and empty talk where the theme is the Most High. It is evident from the Old Testament that by a perverse use of language social and religious corruption had been spreading throughout the life of the nation; possibly evil-doers had learned the trick of purposely lowering moral standards and breaking down barriers against self-indulgence, by shameless talk. Even legal forms of oath were wont to be uttered without any corresponding sense of responsibility, and men were in the habit, although they had no intention of fulfilling

their legal contracts, of calling upon the power of righteousness inherent in the nature of things to punish them if they broke their word. It is likely, moreover, that the highest terms to designate the object of religious worship were increasingly used as talismans in a sort of sorcery. Supernaturalism was getting the better of ethicism in the heart of the people, who imagined that some magic power lay in the appellations of their deity. Primitive people are liable to attribute to the name of a thing the powers of the thing itself. Patriotic statesmen accordingly realised that a name and the thing named are vitally associated in men's thoughts and hearts. Debase the name, they reasoned, and you degrade that which it signifies; keep the name sacred, and that will help to hallow the thing itself in the minds of the people. From such experience undoubtedly sprang the commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." And in the very same form, but on solidier grounds of social utility, it may continue to be uttered when Righteousness has become our God.

The only possible defect of the formula is perhaps in the implication that "the Lord thy God" has but one name, whereas any term that stands for Righteousness must be jealously guarded against malevolent and idle profanation. It would seem also to add to rather than to detract from the significance of the injunction, if it were to stand, "Thou shalt not take the names of the Lord thy God in vain."

The second part of the third commandment is a vague and feeble apology or warning. It gives as the reason for not taking the name of the Lord in vain that "the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." What we want to know is *why* the Lord will not hold him guiltless. What is the reason that the vain

taking of his name is forbidden, and what is the measure of the guilt which will be attributed to the desecrator of it? It would seem to be implied in the words “not guiltless” that after all the offence designated is very slight. This second part of the commandment would gain enormously if what is only hinted at were definitely specified. The political motive of the commandment is to be found in the fact, which I have indicated, that a thing named fails to receive due respect when the terms which stand for it are not held sacred. This motive should be expressly stated in the commandment, if any reason for it is to be given at all. And here is one of the cases where a presentation of the reason for a law adds greatly to the readiness with which it will be obeyed. Perhaps a shorter answer could not be given to the question, Why shall the people of a nation not be allowed to take the names of the Lord their God in vain? than by saying, “For he lowers respect for Righteousness who taketh its names in vain.”

An indirect advantage of such a formula would be that, without overtly declaring Righteousness to be the God who speaks, this is clearly brought home by implication, and the mind of the listener is prevented from straying into any supernaturalistic or fantastic realm to search for God. On the contrary, he is brought straight to the inmost shrine of duty. As amended, the whole commandment would read, “Thou shalt not take the names of the Lord thy God in vain; for he lowers respect for Righteousness who taketh its names in vain.”

4. The fourth commandment aims at the preservation of what many regard as the greatest political device ever invented for the moral education of a nation. One day in seven had long been set apart by tribal neighbours of the Jews for paying religious homage to the stars, the

moon, and the seasons of the year as benefactors and saviours—and therefore as gods. But it is generally agreed that, however mythical the character and mission of Moses in other respects, he did, in the fourteenth century before Christ, stand as the representative of the party who were trying to give an ethical significance to the religious practices of the Jews, and to this end transformed the appointed day of rest into an instrument of ethical culture.

Therefore the question whether, in a Decalogue devised solely from national expediency, the fourth commandment shall stand, depends upon the conclusion we come to as to the value of one day of rest in seven to be devoted to thinking upon one's responsibilities to one's nation and one's privileges as a citizen and a man.

The more one reflects about it without bias or bigotry, the more one sees, in the first place, that a periodical day of cessation from labour and business throughout the community is an enormous physical and intellectual gain to the nation, and to every individual in it. But, in the second place, an ethical sabbath is something more than a mere stopping of the routine of earning a livelihood. Any holiday devoted to merry-making is a day of rest, and possibly in many cases merely as a recreation is more effective than a day devoted to philosophic and humanistic contemplation. If, however, the wider interests and ends of humanity are to be brought home to every man and woman in the community, it would seem that a day for ethical reflection is an indispensable necessity, however many other days for mere rest and amusement are established. To abandon such a day without finding some equivalent means of illustrating the spiritual unity and the ideal purpose of the nation, would be to loosen the ethical foundations of our civilisation. It is not

enough that the earning of a livelihood should cease at regular intervals and the people be refreshed by mental relaxation. The renewed vigour must be directed towards the great ends and principles of manhood ; otherwise the very refreshment of mental vitality may mean little more than an increased power to be exploited by others and ultimately expended in increased drudgery in earning a living, or in a more strenuous accumulation of worldly possessions and cares. The nation-builder desires to detach the mind of the people from business and the service of self, chiefly in order to attach it to the claims of the commonwealth and to the glories of art, science, and civilisation. Such being the case, the Deuteronomic sabbath, as giving leisure and opportunity for reflection, stands pre-eminent as an educational invention. It possibly exceeds in its beneficent effects the Christian institutions of preaching, of Baptism as the rite of initiation into the Church, and of the Communion as the rite of the renewal of fidelity among its members to the cause of social righteousness on earth. The regular and closely recurring sabbaths, because devoted to the ideals of the Jewish nation, stemmed the tide of its besetting absorption in merely outward and materialistic occupations, and in the pleasures and diversions of the senses. These ethical school-days turned the minds of the people to the reverent recognition of the claims of the community and of posterity.

In this Deuteronomic version of the fourth commandment, it is quite plain that the Lord's day was man's day. It was Lord's day because it was man's day—working man's rest day. This becomes more evident when it is understood that the Lord was nothing else than the just relationship of man with man considered as the clue to national prosperity. It was this sense of the social ideal

as the only power which can deliver a people out of personal and tribal evils, that led the prophets and law-givers to trace to "the Lord their God" the escape of their people out of the land of bondage. As a fact of sociological dynamics, it was their ideal of tribal loyalty, their obedience to the claim of the community upon them, their allegiance to the will of the tribe itself, that had actually been the cause of their deliverance.

The fourth commandment as it stands in Deuteronomy is, therefore, superbly ethical and naturalistic. The only question as to its fitness arises from the distinctively Jewish nationalism involved in it. Can a commandment which so exclusively refers to the Jews ever have the same binding force upon Englishmen or Americans or Japanese as it has had upon the descendants of Israel? Jewish teachers of Jewish boys in England say that an ordinary Christian can have no conception of the intense grip which the Old Testament, and especially such commandments as this fourth, have upon the imagination and feelings of a Jewish boy as compared with their effect upon Gentile children. The hold does not always last through life; yet nothing but the tremendous pressure of the new opportunities for wealth and power which the Gentile nations now offer to the Jew can weaken it.

Four different courses seem open to the educational statesman. In the first place, although envying the greater incentive to righteousness which the Jewish boy receives, he may say that nevertheless the influence of the commandment over the non-Jewish Christian is not to be despised, and must be accepted gratefully for what it is worth. Or, in the second, an alternative to the direct adoption of the Jewish commandment as it stands would be the formulation and promulgation of a corresponding but wholly Anglican commandment. It would

be possible that on its own authority and from free initiative, without any servility to the Old Testament as a book of divine revelation, the Government of England, backed by the deliberate intelligence and will of the whole people, should authorise the keeping of an ethical seventh day of rest, and that in the formulation of this new law a reference should be made not to Jewish history but to English. English history, just as much as Jewish, is an instance of a people being delivered by self-control and the incarnation of justice in its institutions, and of wisdom growing out of national sufferings and trials. Nor is this all. Already for more than a thousand years the keeping of an ethical seventh day of rest has been a prime and persistent factor in leading the nation on from point to point of advance in social justice towards freedom and prosperity. We might well, in our formulation of an English commandment, base the institution not on pre-Anglican and foreign foundations, but on the bed-rock of England itself.

A third policy would be to universalise, to make cosmopolitan or international, the formula ordering the keeping of a seventh day for ethical meditation. It would be possible so to revise the fourth commandment as to remove from it all local historical colouring, and thus render it applicable to every nation and to persons who have replaced patriotism by a world-wide humanism. One cannot help believing, however, that the statesmen of any nation would find irresistible arguments against a universalised as compared with a nationalised injunction ordering a day of ethical meditation. Japan, for instance, like England, could find in her own history adequate arguments for setting a day apart for the worship of the Japanese ideal. If there be no reasons of expediency for referring to the Jewish origin of the institution of sabbath,

every nation could tinge its own commandment with the life of its own past, and point it towards its own future.

But a fourth policy, open to the educational statesman, will probably commend itself as altogether best. Each nation's Decalogue should bear the imprint of its own evolution; but any nation which adopts an ethical sabbath does, as an actual event in history, borrow from the Jews. Hence England's fourth commandment should point both to English and Jewish history. We cannot escape the fact that the Jews originated and maintained the observance of an ethical sabbath, until it finally was adopted by other peoples.

It is true that in the Deuteronomic fourth commandment there are elements which in their literal application are obsolete. No one now, formulating out of present-day experience and circumstances an analogous commandment, would refer to the ox, the ass and cattle as typical forms of property; nor would he speak of sojourners from a foreign country as strangers within the gates. But these terms in no wise obscure the principle involved; nor would there be any gain from substituting for "manservant and maidservant" "butler, parlourmaid, chauffeur, and shop assistant." What is more, the obsolete reference lends the charm of quaintness.

While there is nothing in the contents of the Deuteronomic version to offend, it may be possibly objected that there is not an adequate specification of the positive ends to which the sabbath day is to be appropriated. There is no overt statement to the effect that the day is to be kept sacred to deliberation upon the higher ends of life. Yet this is implied. And the implication would not fail to be fully felt, if a purely ethical and naturalistic denotation were assigned by teachers to the words "the Lord thy God."

If one's God impresses the imagination chiefly by such attributes as infinity, omnipotence and omniscience, a day appropriated to his worship might not necessarily involve meditation on one's own ideals of humanity. But the moment we understand the words to point to the social ideal itself as the living soul of the actual nation, the day declared to be “the sabbath of the Lord our God” becomes identical in import with a day set aside for reflection upon the higher ends of our life. Then, when we are asked to keep the sabbath day holy, holiness, meaning for us sacred to the god we worship, must at the same time mean sacred to the cause of the good in the world. All religious ceremony and keeping of days, when the god is Righteousness itself, becomes ethical; for how can ceremony be other than ethical when it focusses attention upon the standards of truth, beauty and righteousness? A focussing of the attention in this manner is in reality nothing more nor less than a committing of the will to the actualisation of ideals not yet embodied in daily life. Thus in a purely ethical religion even the distinction between ceremonial and morality falls away; the ceremonial can never become homage to an outside agency; it must always produce either at least a hungering after righteousness, or, better still, in addition, the actual turning of the soul towards the source whence refreshment will come—a reaching forth of the hand for the bread of blessing. When the sabbath day becomes purely one of meditation upon the higher ends of life, the keeping of it becomes as much a moral duty as any act of kindness, honesty, or bravery. We cannot separate the practice of morality from the doing of those preparatory acts of spiritual discipline which store up motive power within our minds, and make us ready against temptations and for occasions of heroic energy.

When the term "God" is understood ethically, there will be no danger that the sabbath of the Lord our God will become simply a day of rest which might be diverted to the pursuit of amusement or to the praise of a super-human agency.

CHAPTER II

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS : "THY NEIGHBOUR AS THYSELF "

THE four commandments which we have thus far passed in review may be specially designated as religious, if we may define religion to be the setting up of any power as a god ; they enjoin the worship of morality as an active principle in human life. But if they are religious because they exact worship, they are moral because that which they set up for worship is morality. Thus it is not because religion and morality have anything inherently identical in their nature, but because in this special case morality is deified, that in these commandments the two blend. A commandment that deifies anything is religious ; only one which deifies duty is moral. Here we see plainly that religion and morality, although not identical, are not necessarily antagonistic forces or anti-thetical concepts.

This distinction between religion and morality, and the blending of the two which may exist in one commandment, can be brought out in another way. If we contrast the last six with the first four injunctions of the Decalogue, we note that the last six may be summed up as saying "Be good," and the first four as saying "Love goodness." Now, to love goodness is not the same as to be good, but

the two are activities psychologically and dynamically in vital connection. To love righteousness is to set it up as an object of reverent attention, to let one's craving go out towards it. Such a yearning must precede the being good in the mind of one who has been either indifferent or bad. To say "Be good" to a man who is indifferent or bad, is to overlook the preliminary steps in becoming good. To say "Focus your attention without bias or prejudice upon goodness," is to suggest what even the morally apathetic or antagonistic may easily do. Such a turning of the attention may even be motivated by side issues or by aims positively selfish, and still the fixing of the attention may work the desired transformation. Since to love goodness is to turn the attention respectfully towards it, it is the same as setting up goodness as a god ; it is equivalent to worshipping goodness. The injunction, therefore, is religious. But inasmuch as to love goodness is likely to make a bad man good, we see how it is that religion dynamically must precede morality. Thus those are right who say that unless a man be religious he cannot be moral. But this is true only in case the religion referred to is ethical ; not every religion induces morality in its devotee. But the commandment "Love goodness," if it be obeyed, makes a man morally serious, humble, strenuous, and enthusiastic ; it gives momentum and gladness to duty ; it transforms moral tasks from irksome constraints into joyous mental activities. The first four commandments, by enjoining loyalty to the universal and inherent principle of morality, attempt to secure that inwardness of disposition which is requisite to complete righteousness. They look to the character side, and to the whole of character—to the inward fountain-head or reservoir of right activity. In contrast to them, the last six are particular rather than universal commandments.

They consider specific relationships and duties and point to particular persons, and they are in the main external rather than inward. They are concerned more with what is to be done than with the ultimate motive for doing it.

Such being the points of contrast between the first four and the last six commandments when interpreted psychologically, it is easy to see the literary design and skill of the makers of the Decalogue. Their order and arrangement is based upon the principle that mental and moral development advances from the acceptance of universal principles and ideals to the ready carrying out of particular and concrete duties. It is as if the framer of the Decalogue reasoned: If the people will but reverence the universal principles of the good life, an impetus will be given to their character which will bear them on spontaneously to do the thing that is right, and an illumination will be shed from the universal principles, enabling the mind to discover the right path.

5. The commandment enjoining filial reverence has been with delicate judgment placed immediately after the religious commandments. For it, more than any other of the last six, partakes of the nature of religion. "Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." Here is still reverence as the dominant attitude. It is a commandment which enjoins looking up, bowing down, obeying. But here the homage is to be rendered not to the universal and inter-personal principles of right conduct, but to the two persons who from natural inclination and under pressure of social sanction inevitably embody for the child and illustrate and inculcate laws of right conduct. The fifth commandment insists that each of us shall enshrine at the right hand of righteousness the two beings most immediately responsible for our



existence and most likely to sacrifice mere self for our spiritual as well as our physical nurture.

It is the commandment which pre-eminently binds together the generations of men. At first glance it seems to be wholly backward-looking and history-searching, but its ultimate motive is not retrospective. Its object is to preserve in the new generation the highest moral traditions of the past. And who can more easily hand on the torch of national idealism to any child than its own parents? Indeed, it is a plainly discernible fact that even where nation-builders have exacted no such duty of parents, these, however limited and prejudiced, do stamp their own moral ideas—and sometimes well-nigh indelibly—upon the minds of their children. Their ideas, embodied in homely adages, may not rise in dignity of meaning above worldly wisdom, shrewd prudence and cunning ; but, such as they are, being the actual principles or the ideal standard of conduct of the parents, they are communicated in season and out of season to the children. Wherever the father and mother have not neglected this most natural function, it has had its desired effect. Even the wisest and greatest of men may scarcely outgrow to the end of life the crude and unsystematic but reiterated and insistent teachings of illiterate parents.

This parental function of transmitting moral traditions was seized hold of by the Jewish statesmen and converted into an instrument of national character-building. The parent was made the ethical and religious teacher, and every child became a pupil of his progenitors. The teacher-function of parents was thus lifted up, regulated and strengthened by the commandment of the State exacting homage from children to parents. It is true that overtly nothing is commanded but the looking upward and backward of the child to his elders and superiors in

power. It seems to be a commandment only for the child, but in presupposition and in fact it imposes an imperative upon parents. It constrains them by summoning them to rise to the standard which the word “honour” implies. The actual effect also of this commandment has for ages been to chasten parents quite as much as children to a sense of the dignity of the moral bond between them.

In a second way also is this fifth commandment more a forward-gazing than a backward-looking precept. The reason given for honouring parents is quite undisguisedly not for the parents’ sake, nor because they are unquestionably worthy, but for the children’s and children’s children’s sake. You are enjoined to honour your father and your mother that you may live long in the land which the Lord God gives you. Where parents are honoured, the family will endure; and, through the family, the nation.

One might wish, however, that the reason given had not been made to seem so exclusively a selfish appeal. There is an implication that the child wholly for his own sake is to honour his parents, whereas in fact it is equally for the nation’s. It is especially for the sake of his own descendants and the remoter future of the nation. At the heart of this commandment is implicitly the imperative that parents shall honour children—and children their yet unborn posterity. So much deeper and more essential for the perpetuity of a nation and its service to other nations of the world is posterity-worship than ancestor-worship, that one might wish that our statesmen to-day could turn this commandment inside out, making its inmost motive explicit: “Thou shalt honour thy sons and daughters and their sons and daughters, that thy nation may live long in the land

which the Lord thy God giveth it." It is true that honour to offspring may not consist in obedience ; and yet a close looking to the needs of offspring is not unlike obedience to their nature and claim.

6. Two objections to the sixth commandment, "Thou shalt do no murder," may perhaps be offered which will not be accounted captious. In the modern mind the term "murder" does not include the act of suicide ; and many a person who would morally shrink with horror from the former, counts that those who are utterly weary of life are quite justified in terminating their own existence. The frequency of suicide, moreover, calls for a special moral condemnation of it by the organised social conscience of the nation. Such a condemnation would be by no means futile in effect ; for there is perhaps no crime, on the one hand, so liable to be practised if it is socially condoned, and, on the other hand, so easily prevented by public disapproval. Persons inclined to morbid self-depreciation and despair are toned up to courage and self-control in a society which insists upon the inviolability of every individual life.

A second objection to the formula "Thou shalt do no murder" is that the crime it forbids is only the extreme outcome of acts and dispositions which in their very nature lead up to it ; and yet that the condemnation of the extreme form of a pernicious deed does not necessarily spread its deterrent influence over the preliminary stages of the noxious growth. It is possible that a person well instructed in the injunction "Thou shalt not kill," and emotionally responsive to it, might feel himself justified in committing physical or mental injuries upon himself or another, provided he guarded himself against the fatal degree. We want a commandment which shall unequivocally cover with condemnation not only the act of hatred

which is murderous in tendency or recklessly defiant of consequence, but also the act which to any degree inflicts unnecessary mental or physical suffering or incapacity.

Nor is it enough that a commandment should cover only those injuries which are inflicted through hatred. There are countless ways by which injury is done where there is not only no murderous intent but even no malice. For mere love of pleasure people indulge in acts which diminish or destroy their own or another's health, and ultimately may even induce death. From tenderest motives, also, of kindness and desire to please, they connive, either through thoughtlessness or in defiance of remoter consequences, at acts which sometimes terminate in death and very frequently in weakness and disease.

Some forms of personal impurity, moreover, are to be condemned not under the category of unfaithfulness, but under that of injury to oneself or others. Mere excess of sensual indulgence is of this nature. Such a classification of vice of this order is of great importance, because the failure of marriage in many cases is to be traced to the lack of any condemnation by public opinion of excess, provided there is no unfaithfulness which could be censured as a violation of the exclusiveness of the conjugal relation.

Also, laxity of life among those who are not married may fall under different condemnations. It may be anti-social, not only because it undermines the family life and vitiates the functions of paternity and maternity, but because it injures, when indulgence is excessive, the health and strength of the individuals themselves. The public conscience is far from adequately enlightened as to the indirect and remoter evils entailed by excess in this direction.

It is, of course, true that a sixth commandment thus condemning all infliction of injury would not touch the

question of extra-conjugal immorality, provided there were no excess ; but what I am now insisting upon is that neither will any universalising of the seventh commandment reach the sin of excess as distinct from acts which, while temperate in degree, are committed under conditions that induce consequences disadvantageous to society.

If we so widen the sixth commandment that it shall condemn mental and physical injuries to oneself or others, there will accrue still another great gain : a logical thinking out and a practical application of it will include a censure of drunkenness and every degree of indulgence in intoxicating drinks which induces ill health or decreases physical efficiency. A nation's manual of moral edification cannot omit from its summary of the elementary principles of duty all censure of a form of vice which among the peoples of the West has become a national calamity and a cause of racial deterioration. Such omission in the past may not be cited as a justification for a like omission in the future ; for the history of Christendom is a history of the failure of religion and education to prevent drunkenness and—short of drunkenness—degrees of excess in alcoholic drinking which have perhaps produced evils equal to those of drunkenness.

For these various reasons, therefore, I cannot help believing that, as soon as the religious leaders of our nation become more interested in meeting present-day issues than in perpetuating ancient formulæ, they will revise the sixth commandment in such a way that, whatever the final wording may be, the contents will be equivalent to saying, "Thou shalt do no injury to the mind or body either of thyself or another, unless the general welfare requires it to be done by thee."

7. The exact form of the seventh commandment, "Thou

shalt not commit adultery,” will survive even less well than that of the sixth the kind and degree of scrutiny, from the point of view of national education, which we are applying. In the first place, the word “adultery” is a legal term. The commandment as it stands is therefore a prohibition of certain acts only beyond the limits sanctioned by political authority. To anyone not married it has no application. To such a person it can be made to apply only by indirect inference. In the absence of any commandment against extra-conjugal indulgence, teachers might perhaps be justified in saying that at the heart of the seventh commandment undoubtedly lies the principle of purity, which has a wider application than that covered by the actual wording; and that therefore the spirit, if not the letter, of the commandment justifies our using it as a proof that the national consciousness condemns all forms of unfaithfulness and excess. Such subtlety of reasoning may be justified, however, only upon two grounds. First, it must be shown that psychologically the minds of the people do spontaneously extend the application beyond the specific evil condemned. My own judgment is that they do not do this, and the Old and the New Testaments furnish hundreds of proofs that the prophets, teachers and evangelists came to the rescue by supplementing the commandment with many other injunctions, direct, inward, vivid, and telling. Unfortunately, these other injunctions were not taught nor commanded to be taught by Church or State diligently unto the children, nor to be talked of daily, nor to be bound as frontlets before the eyes. The more carefully worded, then, must be the commandment which the Anglican Church requires to be committed to memory by every confirmand and repeated in the hearing of every communicant each time before partaking of the Lord’s Supper.

In the second place, in order to justify the retention of the seventh commandment as it stands in the Book of Common Prayer, it must be shown that it is impossible to revise it and still keep it effective in compass and form. But such is not the case. The commandment could easily be enlarged and yet be kept much shorter than several of the others.

But not only is the seventh commandment inefficient because merely legal ; it is inefficient because it condemns only the outward act and does not throw its censure inward upon those intentions and purposes, prompted by appetite, which almost inevitably, if entertained, lead to acts which an enlightened social conscience must condemn. Although such a censure of the inward motives which incite to immoral acts is not wholly lacking in the Ten Commandments, it is, however, misplaced : we find it in the tenth commandment. Yet when the Decalogue is being revised, surely there must be a bringing over into the seventh commandment of the injunction "Thou shalt not desire thy neighbour's wife" ; or if exactly this formula be not attached to the prohibition "Thou shalt not commit adultery," the only reason for not doing so must be that it also has been found inadequate. And it will be seen upon scrutiny to share the same deficiency which renders the wording of the seventh commandment inadequate. The injunction "Thou shalt not desire thy neighbour's wife" is again a moral commandment cast into a merely legal and therefore cramping mould. One's neighbour's wife is not the only person whom one must not desire. In the first place, we note in this injunction the implication that the commandment is for men only, as if there were no occasion that any word should be said to women. It is quite possible that when it was formulated, women had so little individuality and were allowed so little liberty

that it never entered the mind of law-givers to keep them moral except by the alert oversight of the husband, the pressure of public opinion, and the fear of being detected. It is also possible that the nature of women was so little understood that their conventional propriety was interpreted as passivity or neutrality, and that therefore no occasion was felt for the injunction "Thou shalt not desire thy neighbour's husband." But such an interpretation of woman is not true, nor is it even an honour to her. For passivity in and of itself is no more beneficent or pure than positive desire and the expression of it, provided the desire be in degree and under conditions not deleterious to society. The seventh commandment, then, must not only have incorporated in it the first injunction of the tenth commandment, but that injunction itself must be made unequivocally to apply to women as well as to men, and to the unmarried as well as to the married. Such a revision would be achieved if instead of "Thou shalt not desire thy neighbour's wife" the injunction stood, "Thou shalt not desire anyone whom, for the sake of the common life, thou shouldst not have." Were this to be incorporated into the seventh commandment, the whole might be made to read, "Thou shalt not commit adultery; neither shalt thou even so much as desire anyone whom, for the sake of the common life, thou shouldst not have."

8. The eighth commandment is defective, and therefore inefficient, in the same way as the seventh. In the first place, stealing is only a legal term. Until the government of a State has by legislation stamped an act as theft, it is not theft. But many a withholding of wealth from another, and many a taking of property from another, although not branded by law as a crime, is gravely pernicious, causes untold suffering throughout

a nation, and is altogether anti-social and disintegrating to humanity in its effects.

In all nations the laws of property fall shockingly short of what the enlightened social conscience to-day is demanding. Thousands of acts ought to be stamped as stealing which have not yet been placed under legal censure. Were this done, tens of thousands of persons who now not only go scot free, but receive social homage and moral deference, would be branded as thieves. But until the government of the State actually condemns an act as theft, it is a rhetorical licence to anticipate such a condemnation by so denominating the act. The word should be kept as a legal term ; and those persons who extend its meaning, instead of enlarging the insight of those who do not yet understand the ethics of property, only offend and harden the prejudices of the rich and the unthinkingly conservative.

My personal judgment is that what the law has laid down as the rights of property must be so respected. The law may be outrageously unjust, but the protest against injustice, at least where constitutional procedure is possible, must not take the form of a self-interested breaking of the law. On the contrary, those who would reform it must the more scrupulously obey it, in order that by agitation and organisation, unvitiated by any evidence of lawlessness or of a personal grievance embittering them, they may convert the majority of the nation to their own sense of the injustice of the existing legal practice. The eighth commandment as it stands, therefore, is in so far good ; but it must proceed to indicate the whole duty of ownership. The most enlightened social conscience of our day sees plainly that it is a wrong against society for anyone to take from others, although not legally prohibited, what the welfare of the com-

munity requires that those others should have. But it sees still further. It is not only the active and aggressive taking that the disinterested judgment of men to-day condemns; under its censure falls also the passive retention of any forms of wealth, of any kinds of the means of health, happiness and social efficiency, which the welfare of the community requires that others should have.

Let it be noted that such a statement as this does not place the test of the right to any wealth on the part of any person—as many individualists and anarchists would have it—in the mere fact that that person wants it, or even in the fact that he individually is in dire need of it. A man may want and may need a thing, and yet for him to possess it may be against the welfare of organised society—of the majority of individuals and, in the long run, of all. We need a formula which shall plainly set the lasting welfare of the nation above either the wants or the needs of the individual. This is not only the ultimate judgment of the enlightened conscience of our day as to what ought to be; it is also in fact the actual theory and philosophy of legislation in all civilised States. Nay, more, it is the actual practice of all civilised States in great crises when the existence of the nation itself is at stake, or when public opinion is fully aroused and decisive as to the common benefit which would accrue from the taking over by the State of any property hitherto privately owned.

But the public in general is extremely and dangerously ignorant as to the philosophy of legal property, the practice of governments and the judgment of conscience. This ignorance would be removed in one generation if the Decalogue, which was required to be learnt by heart by every child and repeated in all religious assemblies at

frequent intervals, condemned not only stealing but all anti-social taking or retention of wealth. If the eighth commandment read, "Thou shalt not steal; neither shalt thou take or keep from another anything which the social welfare requires that he should possess," then it would unequivocally extend its prohibition beyond the narrow limits of such anti-social ownership as political enactment had already forbidden under penalties.

9. The injunction "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour," like the three preceding ones, is pedagogically defective. The specification of this one particular form of deception, although it be the worst form, is in danger of seeming to imply that other forms, in which no false witness against a neighbour is perpetrated, do not come under the censure of the prohibition. The ninth commandment is also defective, like the eighth, in that it is too exclusively legal; for undoubtedly the false witness against a neighbour refers to testimony, if not before a court, at least before a recognised judge, and possibly under oath. To do adequately its work of moral instruction and edification, the commandment should be so recast as to stigmatise unequivocally the whole brood of lies. For undoubtedly all misrepresentation of facts tends in the first place to weaken the love and the delicate sense of truthfulness; and, in the second place, only false statements so insignificant that they are not worth making, or so palpably false that they do not constitute real deception, can be uttered without weakening mutual confidence and trust, neighbourly love and the zest of spiritual fellowship.

The ninth commandment is inadequate in another way; the prohibition against bearing false witness

implies to no one the inclusion of seemingly negative violations of truth—omissions to disclose facts which it would be well for the community that others should know. When one reviews the development of any nation, one feels that the social mischief wrought by suppression of facts, by failure to communicate useful and beneficent knowledge, has mightily, although unobtrusively, retarded for ages the moral and intellectual self-realisation of the mass of the people. Another barrier to progress, possibly equal in evil effects to the withholding of objective facts, has been the suppression or the misrepresentation of private opinions, personal visions, subjective dreams, and idealistic convictions as to right, justice and humanity. As between suppression and misrepresentation, possibly the former has done the more mischief. Although it can scarcely be called lying or deception, it may be so prevalent a vice, and each child may begin the practice of it so early, that throughout whole circles of society individualised opinion on the great issues of life may not even come into existence. We ought to have a commandment that will condemn the suppression of one's inward faith. We need an injunction that shall at least imply that it is a duty to think for oneself and speak one's thought. Most men have never even so much as heard that there is a duty of intellectual honesty and intellectual bravery. But enlightened and patriotic citizens are to-day demanding that everybody from childhood should be encouraged to give expression to the truth that is in him; otherwise he will have no motive for thinking for himself, and without motive will not think. They especially insist upon the necessity of each one's communicating his inward ideals to others; for it is these which contain his valuations as to the various good things of life, and such

valuations constitute the moral wealth of society. Judgments as to values are more precious than knowledge of mere facts. Indeed, specific facts, and even the laws which give their sequence, derive their whole significance from valuations as to the relative worth of things. It would be no excess of subtlety, therefore, for a commandment on truthfulness to differentiate between facts and inward convictions ; for that would make it impossible for anyone to hoodwink his conscience into the belief that he had done his whole duty because he had not suppressed or distorted outward facts, although he withheld his own private judgments.

It might be well to retain the ninth commandment as it stands, but to add to it, so that the whole would read : "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour ; neither shalt thou misrepresent or withhold from him any fact or any conviction of thine own which it were best for the social life that he should know." In order that the kinship of the principle underlying such an injunction with that which is at the basis of the preceding and of the following commandment may be evident, it may be well to point out that the idea of property applies not only to outward wealth but to the knowledge of facts and inward ideals. Facts may be in our exclusive possession. Thus they are a thing that can be owned, and the ownership may be right or wrong, social or anti-social. The same is true of those ideals which well up out of the depths of our own spiritual life and are the standards of what life ought to be, as well as the inmost soul of human experience. The knowledge of facts and of ideals, being property, may be distributed justly or unjustly ; it may be destroyed wantonly. The moral principle of the ownership of objective knowledge and of inward vision is the same as that concerning material

wealth. The ultimate owner is always the nation, whose claim must be based on the needs of the nation ; and all private ownership can only be secondary and derived, and can be justified only on grounds of national expediency. This principle, although not expressly stated, is regulative in the form of the ninth commandment which I have suggested, and undoubtedly would make itself felt wherever the commandment was taught.

10. If we allow the conception of ownership to extend from material objects to facts and inward convictions, we gain a sense of a deeper unity and smoother continuity in the structure of the Decalogue than is superficially perceptible. For the tenth commandment, while proceeding upon the ethical conception of property underlying the eighth and ninth, deals with the motive which prompts to anti-social claims upon human goods. The tenth commandment is more inward than any of the other neighbour-love injunctions.

As I have already pointed out, two provinces of moral conduct which earlier precepts of the Decalogue have outlined are approached again, but from the mental side, in the tenth. With one, “Thou shalt not desire thy neighbour’s wife,” I have already dealt. The other is the psychological correlative of the commandment “Thou shalt not steal” ; it reads, “Neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour’s house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, his ass, or anything that is thy neighbour’s.”

This specification of forms of property not typical of modern wealth might well be dropped, in order to give place to the fundamental principle of the subordination of private to national ownership. Universalised in content, the injunction might read, “Thou shalt not desire to own anything which it would be best for the community that others should possess.” In the seventh and the tenth com-

mandments as I have recast them, the Decalogue would contain two prohibitions aiming to check wrong-doing at its source in the mind of the doer. That insight of the Deuteronomic statesmen, which from among all anti-social dispositions selected lust and greed as elemental, must commend itself to every observer of human nature. If these two evil impulses are rebuked, there is perhaps no occasion, in a brief summary of moral commandments, that there should be a specification of any other evil motives. Lust and greed, more than any other motives, lead to violations of family duty, to deeds of bodily injury, and refusals to deify Duty.

Perhaps, before leaving my comment upon the Decalogue, a word may be in place as to the principle which I have introduced into the last five commandments. In each one of these I have presumed to set up as the universal test or standard of right conduct what might be called the advancement of social welfare, the well-being of the community. I have assumed that what is best for the social life, what is well ultimately for the nation, is right. I have stated that it is morally forbidden to desire anyone, or to take or keep any wealth, or to withhold or distort any truth, or even to desire to own any property, if so doing or so desiring cannot be justified as socially expedient. But I have purposely abstained from using words which would commit me either for or against a purely hedonistic interpretation of the criterion of right conduct. I have not resolved the socially expedient into the happiness-producing ; because, in my judgment, even if universal happiness be the ultimate goal, there is no practical necessity for exacting a recognition of it, as against universal virtue. The ability to judge what is socially expedient does not depend upon a conscious discrimination as to whether worthiness or happiness be the

final factor in consciousness ; and the form into which I have cast the principle will be equally acceptable to either school of ethical theorists.

I am also fully aware of another lack of finality in the forms I have proposed for the last five commandments, but it is a lack of finality which again I would defend. If it be a deficiency, it is one which, in my judgment, is inevitable in the nature of the case. It may be regretted, but it can be removed only by falling into a worse predicament. The lack to which I refer is that, in saying, for instance, "Thou shalt not withhold from anyone a fact which it were best for the community that he should know," one does not specify what facts or class of facts it were best that another should or should not know. Nor does one specify who, in case of doubt or dispute, is to decide whether it be a duty to communicate the knowledge of any given fact. Of what use, then, it may be asked, is such a statement ? It is evident that a person has no such guidance here as he receives from the injunctions "Thou shalt not steal," "Thou shalt not murder," and "Thou shalt not commit adultery," for in these he is referred to the criminal code of his country. But where there is simply a general condemnation of acts or dispositions which violate the principle of social expediency, no ultimate court of appeal is specified. In such cases a man must evidently either fall back upon his own moral judgment as to what is socially expedient, or upon that of some publicly recognised authority. But there exists no such point of moral sovereignty : that is the reason that moral commandments with purely inward sanctions, however equivocal, must be taught.

It would seem that the difficulty here presented must for ever exist, although with the evolution of society it will be continually diminishing. It resolves itself into a

purely practical problem, and thus it ceases to be a puzzle. It is not an ethical self-contradiction, it is not an inherent antinomy of the moral life ; it involves only an unfulfilled achievement. At the consummation of human perfection there will be a complete harmony between private judgment and positive law, and hence no longer any dilemma as to the seat of moral authority.

It may not seem to my readers an unnecessary repetition, if I close this chapter by bringing together the injunctions which I have tentatively suggested as desirable revisions of the Decalogue. As I review them, I have a strong sense that under a rational religion of duty many ancient rules of conduct will rightfully lose their authority, for the occasion will pass away which required them ; and that, with the deepening of experience and with change of circumstance, new principles of conduct must perforce be adopted. But I am at the same time strengthened in the conviction that men will never cease to hear within them the voice of the Social Conscience uttering ten elemental Words of life, different in form, perhaps, from these, but identical in meaning :—

1. I am the Lord thy God : thou shalt have none other gods before me.

2. Thou shalt not make a god of pleasure, wealth, station, or any outward gain ; neither shalt thou worship any Being, however powerful, except for its human wisdom and goodness ; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous god, visiting through transmission of blood, through the teaching and example of parents and by public opinion, the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and in all these ways showing mercy unto thousands in them that love me and keep my commandments.

3. Thou shalt not take the names of the Lord thy God in vain ; for he lowers respect for Righteousness who taketh its names in vain.

4. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it sacred to the higher destinies of man. Six days shalt thou devote to labour and to recreation. But the seventh is the sabbath of the Lord thy God.

5. Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

6. Thou shalt do no injury to the mind or body either of thyself or another, unless the general welfare requires it to be done by thee.

7. Thou shalt not commit adultery ; neither shalt thou even so much as desire anyone whom for the sake of the common life thou shouldst not have.

8. Thou shalt not steal ; neither shalt thou take or keep from another anything which the social welfare requires that he should possess.

9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour ; neither shalt thou misrepresent or withhold from him any fact or any conviction of thine own which it were best for the social life that he should know.

10. Thou shalt not desire to own anything which it would be best for the community that others should possess.

CHAPTER III

THE LORD'S PRAYER : TO WHOM ADDRESSED

ONLY one passage from the Bible takes precedence over the Decalogue in the rank and office assigned it by the makers of our national manual of religious services. The rubric enjoins that the Lord's Prayer, like the Ten Commandments, shall be committed to memory by every confirmand. But, what is more, it is to be repeated twice every morning and twice every evening, throughout the year, in every church of England, by people as well as by priest. It appears twice in the Communion Service, once in each of the rites of Baptism, and once in the ceremonies of Confirmation, of Marriage, of the Visitation of the Sick, of Burial, of the Churching of Women, of Communion, and of the Ordering of Deacons and Priests and the Consecration of Bishops, and in the Accession Service.

This pre-eminence given to the Lord's Prayer is not based on an error of judgment as to its significance compared with other passages of the New Testament. Everybody agrees that it is, in the words of Tertullian, a *breviarium totius evangelii*; or, as Cyprian characterised it, *cœlestis doctrinæ compendium*. It stands in the New Testament as the Decalogue in the Old, so that the question whether we shall allow it in the future to hold

the same place in England's manual of moral edification resolves itself into whether the New Testament message shall overtop that of the Old, together with the question—which we have perhaps settled affirmatively in the first chapter—whether brief summaries are to be retained as an educational device.

If the New Testament message and a compendium of it are to continue to hold their ascendancy, it must be entirely on grounds of national expediency. From this point of view, no question as to the authorship of the whole or of any part of the Lord's Prayer can enter in, to modify our decision. Were it proved that Jesus Christ was not the author of it, but that it was a form already current in his day, or were it shown that he (as some used to think) simply compiled it, its intrinsic value, if it had any, would not be diminished. Nor, on the other hand, were it to be historically verified that it originally emanated from the lips of Jesus, would this increase its value. Such verification might enhance the worth of Jesus, but not *vice versa*. The value of a gift precious in itself can increase our debt to the giver, but our general debt to the giver can add nothing to the inherent worth of a gift.

The fact that the Lord's Prayer appears only in two of the Gospels—and neither of these the earliest—is irrelevant, from the point of view of its present usefulness. Nor is its significance in the least lowered because contradictory settings are given to it in Luke and Matthew. It can make no difference to its value for us that Luke represents it as having been given by Jesus at the request of one disciple, who asked, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples," and that according to Matthew it was given as a part of the Sermon on the Mount. It would make no difference, were scholars

finally to decide that its setting in Luke is the more likely one, and that it was inserted later into the Sermon. The fact is also of no bearing that in Luke and Matthew the forms of it differ. It cannot concern us that, as the Revised Version shows, in Luke the third and seventh petitions are absent. If these are of direct help to us, and are worthy on that account to hold the eminence in our scheme of national redemption which they have hitherto held, their authority would in no wise be weakened because they lack the sanction of Luke. The case is the same with the word "our" before "Father." Even if the earliest form omits this pronoun, there may be the same reason for our retaining it which perhaps justified those who first inserted it. Likewise with the words, "For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever."

Nor should any doubt as to what any phrase originally meant deter us from independently attaching to it the interpretation which it might most serviceably bear for us. For instance, as to the meaning of the word "daily" before "bread": the question for us is not whether the oldest tradition was correct which interpreted the Greek word as meaning constant or continual, or whether it originally meant "the bread of our need" or "our bread of riches." The problem is only as to what we find that it will be best henceforth for us to say and mean. The Revised Version leaves "our daily bread" in the text, but in the margin prints the remark that the meaning in the Greek is "our bread for the coming day." Now, to ask only for our bread for the coming day is a very different thing from asking for our daily bread; and when we are in the way of revision, if the Lord's Prayer is to be retained at all, it might be very desirable that the people of a nation should be taught to ask daily only

for bread for the coming day (whether that was the original meaning or not); they would then escape having indelibly stamped into their thought an expression which naturally suggests that we ask for bread for every day of our life, however long we are to live. The principle is clear that, if we keep any part or change any part of the document, it must be wholly because that is the best means which we can discover to serve the national end.

In order to determine what place, if any, national expediency would justify us in assigning to the Lord's Prayer in the nation's ritual, we must consider, as we did concerning the Decalogue, to whom it is addressed. Who is the Father? Secondly, by whom is it uttered? What is the character, the moral worth, the situation, social and economic, and the degree and kind of power, which the prayer implicitly attributes to the petitioners? Thirdly, are the things asked for, the things most urgently needed and most worth attaining? Will the people of a nation be best educated morally, intellectually, and physically by asking for and (let us assume) attaining the things which this compendium of the whole Gospel presents as primal and elemental needs?

In studying the Decalogue, we found ourselves rationally reconciled both as to the Being from whom the commandments are represented as issuing and as to the persons to whom they are evidently addressed. Their emanation from the community in its idealism as a unit, and their direction towards the individuals who constitute the nation, was a natural and fitting procedure; it pointed to an abiding sociological activity. And, now, the very fact that the Decalogue was an imperative proceeding from the rational will of the community and challenging into activity the wisdom and goodness latent in the individual members of the nation, leads us to anticipate that we shall

find the Lord's Prayer to be addressed to that same collective wisdom from which the Ten Commandments issued.

If one considers, moreover, what had been the religious and national evolution of the Hebrew people from the seventh century B.C., when Deuteronomy was published, to the day when the Lord's Prayer was accepted as a compendium of the whole Gospel, one can scarcely resist assent to the interpretation which I have here suggested. In the seventh century B.C. the Hebrew nation was still fully conscious ; it was centralised in purpose and strong in hope. It was almost dazzled with the vision of future domination and splendour which its self-confidence projected. But now for centuries inward corruption and adverse relationship with surrounding States had broken and disintegrated its centralised idealising will. As a State it had lost its independent sovereignty, and only a remnant remained faithful to its political dream. Nor had the community for centuries been able to bring forth a prophet who could inspire the multitudes as of old. For generations the dispersion of the individuals of the nation had been going on throughout the length and breadth of the Roman Empire. The few Jewish patriots who continued to organise a political party had become overwrought fanatics, almost mad in the intensity with which they hoped against all discouragements. Nor was there among them any man of adequate statesmanship and personal ascendancy. One might almost say that the self-conscious nationality which produced the Decalogue had now grown too feeble to whisper a word or control the wills of individuals. Religious enthusiasm, national insight and purpose, not finding outlet in the government of a politically independent State and in a centralised point of national sovereignty, had become

broken up, and found lodgment only in individual and unofficial dreamers and in little voluntary groups of enthusiasts. Religion, as all historians point out, had grown inward, and the Temple worship did not succeed in making it more than the concern of individual souls and of private enterprises in voluntary co-operation. Instead of one point of self-consciousness, centralised in the head of the State, there were many scattered and confused sufferers only—obscure men, sensitive victims of national calamity. It was as if God had been compelled to flee from the political throne, to disguise himself and hide in the secret recesses of the unassertive hearts of the poor and the meek.

On the whole, this change is regarded by the moral judgment of every student as one of spiritual advance. In the seventh century B.C. religion had been too exclusively political, external and coercive. Statesmen, it is true, had already discovered the civic and historic significance of universal morality as compared with other causes of national prosperity. They had already realised the need of a national ethical cult. They manifested profound insight into the ways and means by which the claim of right conduct could be forced into the centre of the attention of a whole people, and they set such machinery as is at the disposal of political authority into operation for this end. Like a mighty mother, the Jewish State set about to instruct and discipline her children. With firm but tender touch she began shaping their characters for citizenship and self-sacrifice in national service. But despite our recognition of the necessity of such political compulsory education in morality, we must admit that, the moment the necessity for it is removed, such domination of the individual by the organised will of the State should cease. Indeed, it was ethically a good fortune to

the Jewish people that their political sovereignty and organisation were not abolished before an adequate number of the people were able inwardly to perpetuate the insight and passion of the prophets, and that political disaster was now driving them into such religious fellowship as we see organising itself under John the Baptist and Jesus. Rather than that religion should remain only external, a lodgment only in the private hearts of intuitive and poetic but powerless patriots was better.

We cannot deny that national idealism would require that the ethical sovereignty should be, at one and the same time and equally, in outward politics and in the inward aspiration and insight of all the members of the community. But if, when the Jewish people lost political independence, the moral idealism that had once controlled its rulers was not lost or annihilated, but retreated merely from politics to religious ritual and to family worship and education and deepened its hold here, the Yahwistic party who issued the Book of the Law had not failed. For there can be no doubt that throughout the old Jewish dispensation morality had always been too exclusively an outward and political concern, and too dependent upon priestly and princely leadership. The community as an organised force overbore the individuality, self-consciousness and moral initiative severally of the members in general. The change from such domination of the community to inwardness and to the self-consciousness of the individual as a moral agent is, as I have said, recognised by all historians as the chief line of evolution from Judaism to organised Christianity. It is an advance from the national to the individual point of view, from the political to the psychological. But the yearning for fellowship and ultimately for the full and political independence of a spiritual community must become unbear-

ably intense in hearts passionately possessed by that general will of humanity which is too big and powerful for the isolated soul to contain, which demands a city and then a nation for expression and for scope of creative work, and which may some day unify all the peoples of the earth. To no psychologist of the inner religious life, therefore, as it feeds and is fed by the same life in friends, neighbours, and fellow-citizens, will it seem at all strange to interpret the Lord's Prayer as a challenge of individual souls—whoever they may be—to the general Will of the Community. This Will had somehow for generations failed to actualise itself ; it had been present, but only as one who is a sovereign by right but not in fact, and who may for a time succeed only in disturbing the actual order of social life by stimulating hopes and fears.

The full reasonableness of this interpretation can only reveal itself to us gradually, as we consider more and more closely the implications of the Lord's Prayer concerning the character and situation of the persons who are to utter it and the social and moral significance of the specific blessings asked for. Before entering, however, into these questions, I invite my reader to consider first in how far the method I am using imputes my own interpretation of religion to the conscious thought of the New Testament writers and characters ; and, secondly, I shall detain him over certain points of difference and of identity between the ordinary interpretation of the Power addressed in the Lord's Prayer, and that which I am advocating.

It is possible that the New Testament writers and the personages whom they present were controlled by certain ideas as the regulative principles of their conduct, and yet that they did not have these consciously before their mind. It is possible also that they illustrate and exhibit in their writings mental processes of which they consciously knew

nothing, yet which to-day are perfectly familiar to the disciplined psychologist. He, for instance, may detect from their words and conduct that they had arrived at a certain point of view and become filled with a certain enthusiasm, according to the law of the association of ideas. They then are to him a particular instance of a regular sequence in mental action which is found to be operative in every human mind. Yet they themselves may be absolutely unacquainted with the mental principle of which they are a living embodiment. They may possibly not have heard that there is such a thing as an association of ideas by contiguity or frequency of repetition, or in any other way.

As the law of association is a description not of how the mind ought to act, but only of the way it does proceed, it may be better to compare the moral ideas which control the mind of the New Testament writers to the exactly analogous case of the laws of logic, which act as regulative principles of thinking in the minds of people who have never heard of logic and might not even be able to understand what a normative principle is. A person may be perfectly logical and illustrate in his reasoning the law of identity and the law of excluded middle, yet know nothing of either. A trained logician could detect instances of perfect syllogisms in the reasoning of those who might even resent the notion that anything in their mental operations could be so labelled. When, therefore, psychologists or logicians presume to understand the mental operations of another man better than he does himself, they are not guilty of setting themselves up as greater than he. They cannot be charged with patronising him, as if they thought they possessed deeper penetration. They are only maintaining that their specialty is different from his. They may see that he

has infinitely finer insight into more significant realities, and is an immeasurably greater character. Indeed, on this very account he may the better illustrate for them the tendencies and the standards with which they are acquainted and he is not.

When we come to look not for a mental sequence or a moral principle operating in the minds of the New Testament characters, but for the real factors in their moral and religious experience, the case is more complex. Here I believe that they were not only influenced by, but were actually conscious of, the very factors which the sociological psychologist of our day accepts as data for his theories. Yet they viewed these factors from a totally different standpoint. They saw them in a different light and in other connections ; they named them differently. Probably they were wholly unaware that the factors could be viewed psychologically and sociologically.

Thus it well may be that Jesus Christ, in using the term "our Father," was designating the idealistic cohesive principle of all human society ; it may be that this reality was not only influencing him but that he consciously felt and understood it as the vital principle of the spiritual organism of society ; yet it is quite possible that he could not more exactly indicate it than by calling it his Father in heaven. I say he may have felt it, it may have acted upon him, he may have lived in it and by it and have worshipped it and obeyed it, but he may have interpreted it as a personal agent who, in his belief, had created the universe. Still, all the time the factor which he was using and fully appreciating may in reality, so far as psychological and sociological verification are concerned, have been but a regulative, normative principle operating in and among the souls of men. It may have been but the moral law as an active energy among human minds.

This moral law may have no existence in reality apart from the spiritual organism of human society. It may be nothing but the general will of the community.

Jesus may not have been able to distinguish between the elemental facts of his moral experience and the theory and idea or point of view from which he perceived them. On this account, any such interpretation as I am giving to the realities to which he directed men's attention, would possibly have astonished, if not bewildered him ; it might have seemed false and dangerous to him. But, let me repeat once more, a man of genius may be consciously envisaging certain powers and realities in experience from the point of view of animism or personal theism ; and yet he may none the less be aware of them and dealing with them, they may be regulating him and he may be inspired by them.

I have said that it is quite possible that Jesus never attempted to analyse his complex and developed moral experience, in order to detect how much in it was the raw material of experience and how much due to the current presuppositions and conceptions of his time, under which all its elements were classified and by which they were even built up and interpreted. But I ought to hasten to say that I do not believe that it is possible for any human being ever thoroughly to denude any experience of all hypotheses and expose to our understanding the elementary sensations, so to speak, of the moral life. Surely the modern psychologist and sociologist cannot do this. He also must have pigeon-holes in which he sees placed the elements of experience, and he cannot know these except as thus classified. The only difference between him and the earlier thinkers about righteousness is that he is fully conscious that what he experiences is an amalgam of theory and life, and that his theory is dis-

tinguished from the old one by being a constituent part of that whole of modern organised common sense which is called science. But this enables him to be aware that the difference between his interpretation and that of another is due not to difference of raw material but to the fact that he uses a different set of pigeon-holes.

The sociologist may see a certain real factor in experience as "the general will of the community"; but he may at the same time believe that Jesus Christ, having no such pigeon-hole for it, labelled it, very wisely and effectively for his own purpose, "Our Father who art in heaven." If, therefore, such an account be correct, we cannot say that Jesus did not at all mean the moral law as the unifying principle of human fellowship. He must have meant it. Take the case of a sun-worshipper, who believes that the sun is a great living, self-conscious spirit. Very different is his interpretation of the sun from that of modern physics, chemistry, and astronomy. But nevertheless it is incontrovertible that he in his own way is referring to the same factor in the life of our senses to which the scientific man refers. Or take another illustration: a man may believe that he is tempted of the devil—of a personal agency outside of himself—but the whole basis for his belief is a certain experience of appetites and passions and ambitions which, he knows only too well, are operative in him. He does not view them as the modern empirical psychologist would do; he thinks and speaks the thought and language of religious spiritism; yet he is talking of realities, and talking intelligently. Up to a certain point he may deal with them as wisely as the best-trained empirical psychologist.

I may cite as illustrative and corroborative of my point of view the opening paragraph of Professor Gilbert Murray's notes on his translation of the *Hippolytus*.

He says : " The Aphrodite of Euripides' actual belief, if one may venture to dogmatise on such a subject, was almost certainly not what we should call a goddess, but rather a Force in Nature, or a Spirit working in the world. To deny her existence you would have to say not merely ' There is no such person,' but ' There is no such thing ' ; and such a denial would be a defiance of obvious facts." In exactly the same way, I am maintaining that the Being to whom the Lord's Prayer is addressed is almost certainly not what we should call an intelligent agent outside of the living organism of human society, but rather a Force of Nature or a Spirit working in the world—that spirit being the general will of the community. To deny the existence, therefore, of the Being to whom the Lord's Prayer is addressed, you would have to say not merely " There is no such person," but " There is no such thing " ; and such a denial would be a defiance of obvious facts. I maintain that the very same raw material of moral experience which has been pigeon-holed by supernaturalistic theologians as an infinite Person, can now be classified from the sociological and psychological point of view as a verifiable mental and social Force in human life, and that when it is thus treated it is rescued for the use of the scientific imagination of man and for the lasting benefit of human society.

Yet I should add that, even were my interpretation of the mental processes and the moral factors in the religious experience of the New Testament characters wholly wrong, the main purpose of my analysis and its ultimate validity would not be overthrown. I have taken the Lord's Prayer as an avenue through which to penetrate not simply to what Jesus and the disciples thought and felt, consciously or unconsciously, but to the realities of our present-day living experience. It is true that I believe

such living experience as ours to-day to have been also the basis of the words and thoughts and policy of Christ and the Apostles. In this, however, I may be wrong ; but no such error can overthrow the first-hand knowledge of our present-day life. One might even, without impiety, say that if Christ and the Apostles did not experience and perceive from their own peculiar point of view the same factors, relationships and standards as constitute the framework of our moral universe to-day, so much the worse for the founders of Christianity. But, on the other hand, if the method by which the geologist reconstructs the past evolution of the surface of the earth be logically justifiable, so also is the method by which the psychologist and sociologist of modern moral and religious experience can make sane and significant the sayings and the lives of the men who in times past have been the moral inspiration of the ages that followed them.

In turning to consider various points of identity and difference between the ordinary interpretation of the Power addressed in the Lord's Prayer and that which I am expounding, it may be well to remember that the New Testament wholly omits to say critically or scientifically what that Power is. The assumption is made that readers will be able to identify it for themselves. It is true that from the New Testament times until now the Christian organisations which have survived in the rivalry for existence have insisted that the Power referred to is none other than an infinite personal being, not only immanent in the universe of man and nature, but transcendent. This consensus of opinion in Christian history, however, cannot have the weight it would, had not all other interpretations been crushed out by the hounding down of heretics. It is quite possible that, had other explanations been allowed a fair field and no favour,

in the struggle for existence which would have ensued among rival theories, some other than the one sanctioned by the churches would have prevailed. Consequently the consensus of ecclesiastical authorities must weigh as nothing against a study of the meaning of the New Testament writers and of our present-day experience, according to the methods by which all other mental and social phenomena are now being approached. The prestige of the Church's dogma must count as nothing, because antagonistic teachings were suppressed not by disproof but by terrors and punishments. What is more, the absence of a critical method in the New Testament writers, and the omission of anything like a philosophic theory of the experiences they were treating of, make it impossible to say that a new interpretation of the factors of moral experience is an attack upon anything that the New Testament writers or Christ himself thought or said. I shall in a future chapter set forth arguments which to me are convincing that even the writers of the great Creeds of Christianity, despite their transcendent metaphysics, kept a firm intellectual and moral hold of verifiable factors in real life, and were always referring to these, whatever interpretation they may have given to them as manifestations of an infinite spirit, immanent and transcendent.

Let me also, before comparing the Power addressed in the Lord's Prayer, as I interpret it, with the conventional doctrine, ask the indulgence of my readers if I should seem in some of the sentences of this chapter to identify absolutely the Power that saves with the general will of the community. I shall for brevity's sake permit myself to fall into such a seeming limitation of that factor which in my judgment has always been indicated by the word God ; but I shall be in danger of no false inference from so doing. Therefore I shall feel myself at liberty later

to point out that the good in man under natural law, when it is unifying a nation's life, is not the whole of the good in man and nature, but only its consummation and highest manifestation.

1. If it should prove expedient hereafter, on other grounds, for worshippers to address the Lord's Prayer to the Unifying Will of the Community as the source of the nation's moral salvation, there would be this great additional advantage in so doing, that, then, our God would no longer be exposed to philosophic scepticism, and thereby weakened in his influence on man. There could never again be any discussion as to whether he was knowable or not, for nobody thinks of denying that this God is already known in part and may continually become better known. I call attention to this difference between a transcendent source of salvation and a humanistic one without dwelling upon the enormous amount of ingenuity and energy that have been spent throughout the Christian era in beating down the legitimate doubts of human reason as to the existence and character of an infinite and transcendent reality. Should the Being addressed in the Lord's Prayer hereafter be humanistically interpreted, all the time and energy which have been spent in suppressing freedom of thought might thenceforth be devoted to the constructive work of human redemption. So great would be this gain that, even were one to find—though I do not think we should—that there were some off-setting disadvantages, still the change of interpretation would prove on the whole an incalculable blessing.

2. To deify the Idealising Will of the Community as the power that redeems is to set up not a new God, but a part of the Christian God. It is the setting up of that part of the Christian deity which by all believers in orthodox Christianity is counted the part nearest and most

beneficent to us mortals. All Christians teach that whatever in the spirits of men and in society is working towards brotherly love is Christ, and is the infinite creative spirit. How, then, can it be said by such believers that the Idealising Will of the Community is a new or strange deity? For, by their own testimony, its face is the face of Christ; it is the infinite spirit incarnate. Whether it be so or not the scientific judgment may hesitate to say; but the most that the Christian who protests can justify as an objection to the new interpretation is that, while setting up a part of the power that saves, it omits or overlooks or neglects another part. On this point, it remains still to be discussed whether that "something more" in the conventional interpretation of God is not something more than it is wise and expedient to deify. It remains to consider whether the good in man is not a jealous God, and must not, by its very nature, become supremely jealous, when human worshippers look to a transcendent deity.

But, whether this be the case or not, there can be no doubt that Christians, in proportion as they are concerned with the actual coming of the kingdom of God on earth, must be pre-eminently occupied with the latent good in man and nature; hence it is very easy for the devout Christian to accept the new limitation to deity which the scientific spirit requires. Already there are religious societies in England which open their services by chanting the Lord's Prayer, and yet the most of their members consciously interpret the Power addressed as being exclusively the Good, actual and potential, in man under natural law. In the Hanley Labour Church, for instance, the committee and the members a few years ago discussed whether such a use of the Lord's Prayer committed them to belief in an infinite personal Creator; and

it was decided that, while individual members might be at liberty thus to interpret it, the Church as a whole was not so committed, as many of the members, in saying or singing "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done," were looking only to the ideal of human perfection and to the human and natural causes which make for its actualisation.

The ordinary form into which the Christian identification of God with the Good in Man is cast is that God acts only through human instrumentalities. But if this be true, see what it means when applied. If no man is befriending the poor, then God is not befriending them ; for he works only through human instrumentalities. If fathers or mothers or sisters are not shielding the youth of our cities from the dangers of ignorance and appetite, then God is not shielding them ; for he works only through human instrumentalities. If men do not hear the cry of toiling children, then God does not ; for except through human ears and eyes and hands he does not hear and see and touch.

But while many preachers affirm that God works only thus, they do not apply the principle logically and thoroughly. It is comparatively easy, however, when a principle is once acknowledged, to bring about the thorough application of it ; it is by no means so difficult as would be the task of introducing a new principle. Already vast numbers of Christians acknowledge that God does not bring material help to human beings except through human instrumentalities. They concede that he does not carry coals or potatoes or shoes or coats to those in want. Only one other step on their part is needed in the same direction, and they will see, and be glad to see, that he also never visits human souls who are in need, except through the medium of other human souls. They will perceive that it is just this higher work which

a truly wise and beneficent God never would do except through human agency. If he does not carry bread and meat to the hungry, but rather than that lets them starve, because he wants us to do it, surely he would never carry them spiritual love and joy, for the same reason.

There can be no philosophic or scientific objection to the statement that God works the works of love only through human instrumentalities ; for this must in the very nature of the case mean that the works emanate from personal agencies within the living organism of society, and that no love, no inspiration, no purifying influence ever flows immediately into any human being's soul from some personal agency beyond. God then becomes identical with the good in men. If he never does anything of himself—that is, unmediated by a human agent—if he never puts any extra weights into the scale on the side of justice and love, if he never sets anything right over and above what men set right, if he never acts except through men, it all comes to the same thing as if a transcendent personal agency did not act at all ; and we find ourselves back on the ground of humanistic religion and humanistic theology—that is, of religion and theology minus supernaturalism. But here is a case where minus turns out to be plus—where the part is greater than the whole.

3. Perhaps the highest moral ground on which transcendent theism has defended itself is the claim it makes, that it meets better than any other scheme of moral salvation the craving of the heart for fellowship in the inner life. It boasts that it alone can assure the unfortunate and the illiterate, the lonely and the outcast, of an unseen friend, infinite in strength and mercy, all-satisfying in beauty and charm of personality. And it turns to those who do not make use of the idea of an

infinite loving Creator and yet hope to move men, and asks in pitying condescension, "Pray, what have you to offer the neglected and the bereaved? Your ethical religion without spiritual supernaturalism is all very well, but it can never propagate itself among the people. It can never inspire, redeem, console and heal. You have cast yourselves off from the source of moral enthusiasm, from communion with the Creator, the all-holy one. But try your experiment," says transcendent theism; "you will do no permanent harm, and your ultimate failure will teach men not to look your way a second time. And when you fail, you yourselves will know whither to point men for strength and peace. That fellowship which the world does not offer, and yet which as a moral being every man needs and craves, men will find again in communion with an invisible, superhuman personal spirit, who knows each of us in our inmost thought and desire, who accepts us as we are, who forgives and heals and strengthens us in his tender mercy."

The answer of humanistic religion, on this highest ground that transcendent theism can assume in defence of itself, is plain enough, and as unanswerable as it is clear. In the first place, the humanist accepts the presupposition of the transcendent theist, that an efficient scheme of moral salvation must satisfy man's craving for spiritual fellowship and must be able to use, as a motive to inspire men to do the right, the desire for personal approbation when they have done well, and, when they do ill, the fear of offending and disappointing someone whom they care for supremely and who, they know, cares for them. This longing for personal fellowship in the spiritual life is, I believe, next to the craving for holiness, the highest need of the human heart. All men, in their sense of weakness and shame at the thought of their own transgressions, in the consciousness

of their responsibility to make life everywhere better and sweeter, in hours of wider affection for humanity and the whole sentient world ; when they are lifted out of self and see a life of perfect justice and purity to be the only real life ; indeed, at all times of deeper insight and purpose, feel that personal sympathy and communion in devotion to an ideal task is an inward necessity. It is not merely a sentimental longing. Men might well do without it, if it were only one more pleasure—a serener peace, a deeper joy—to be attained ; the poor are accustomed to do without. But it happens that fellowship in devotion to the Ideal is the very source of sustained moral enthusiasm ; it is men's moral nature longing to be fed and strengthened that urges them into fellowship. The impulse to be holy, conscious of its own weakness, whispers within them that if only another were present to reinforce, the strength would be adequate to the emergency. Indeed, those who expect any isolated human being of his own unaided power to become pure and grow into unselfish love, have not learnt the first lesson of the art of regeneration. For moral debility and disease enter into us by contagion, by touch, by infection, by a poisonous social atmosphere. There was undoubtedly the predisposition beforehand, but a predisposition is not disease ; and it was the polluting environment coming into direct action upon the predisposition that caused the corruption. Had no one else been a liar, it had not been impossible for us to speak the truth. Except for companionship with hypocrites, we should have felt the courage of our opinions rise within us. It is because others cheat in business transactions, that we find it too hard to practise fair dealing ; it is the gambling of others that fires our love of feverish risk. We speculate wildly in commerce, because of the common wont of men covetously to seek the wealth they have not earned.

It is likewise with our sins of omission. Who avoids the public duties of citizenship and does not thereby tempt every other man to shirk responsibility and give over legislation and administration into the hands of self-seekers? Who is vain and makes display in dress and equipage, who has contempt for honest work, who is exclusive and proud of birth, and we do not all begin to put a fictitious value upon such nothings? What man is unclean in talk and does not give a signal to the demon within us to stir up fumes which steal away the moral vision? On the other hand, if anyone is merciful or just or faithful or patient or ready to die for the world, we likewise find it easy to be merciful and just and to offer ourselves. It is by intimate communion with heroism that we are first stirred to daring self-sacrifice. It is the faith that someone somewhere is pure in mind, which turns unworthy desire into self-disgust; such a one demonstrates to us the possibilities of virtue. But where, it is asked, are we to find this fellowship?

All the chances seem against our finding it. Even if the human beings close about us are capable of redeeming, how often is their virtue rendered inoperative by the fact that, as George Eliot says, "Our daily familiar life is but a hiding of ourselves from each other behind a screen of trivial words and deeds. And those who sit with us at the same hearth are often the farthest off from the deep human soul within us, full of unspoken evil and unacted good." But if the trivial words and deeds of home life are a screen behind which men hide, what shall we call the conventionalities of formal society, the set phrases of religious teaching, the heartless rules of business, the entrenched prejudices of race, class and sect? These are a stone wall of separation. How is the one needing help to defy these, to meet the helper and coalesce

with him in power? Who even sees the Life hidden behind the record of self-indulgence or selfish insolence?

So may some stricken tree look blasted, bough and bole,
Champed by the fire-tooth, charred without, and yet, thrice-bound

With dreriment about, within may life be found,
A prisoned power to branch and blossom as before,
Could but the gardener cleave the cloister, reach the core,
Loosen the vital sap: yet where shall help be found?
Who says "How save it?"—nor "Why cumber it the ground?"

. . . . That tree art thou! All sloughed about with scurf,
Thy stag-horns fright the sky, thy snake-roots sting the turf!
Drunkenness, wantonness, theft, murder gnash and gnarl
Thine outward, case thy soul with coating like the marle
Satan stamps flat upon each head beneath his hoof!
And how deliver such? The strong men keep aloof,
Lover and friend stand far, the mocking ones pass by,
Tophet gapes wide for prey: lost soul, despair and die!

The transcendent theist will answer, "No finite human power can save it. This side of the Almighty Gardener, there is no one who can reach the core and loosen the vital sap; there is no other help to be found." But he forgets that the whole of the humanward aspect of what he calls an infinite creative spirit is identical, by his own concession, with the good in man, with human agencies, so far as these are ever tender, pure, self-abnegating and strong. No testimony, therefore, of any person saved under the discipline of a religion of transcendent theism has the slightest weight as argument in disproof of a religious humanism, unless it can be shown that strength and consolation have come unmediated by human agency. There is no occasion for one who, like myself, interprets moral experience from a humanistic point of view, to deny in the least the efficacy of the real factors in religious life under the transcendent theory.

The only possible protest from the naturalistic point of view against transcendent theism is when it presumes to reject human agency and to inculcate as morally good the practice of direct, unmediated union with an infinite personality.

But even in cases where testimony is offered as to the efficacy of such a practice, the humanist need not deny and will not deny the sweetness of the consolation and peace that come to the devotee. People do get comfort and ecstatic joy in the thought of a transcendent lover. The emotional effects follow inevitably from imaginative faith in the presence of such a lover. They would come even though the divine presence were a mere figment of fancy. If we imagine, although mistakenly, that we see a friend coming towards us, we have the same pleasure—so long as the illusion lasts—as if it were really he. But what the naturalist in religion denies, and not only denies but with alarm rejects, is the claim that the method of inducing such effects by the thought of a transcendent spirit is wise and good. He denies that the effects are beneficial morally and spiritually to the individual. Still stronger is his disbelief that any wise statesman who wishes to develop the manliness and virility of the people of his country can for a moment countenance the systematic cultivation of spiritual fellowship with a personal agent outside of the organism of humanity.

Nor is this moral protest on the part of the idealistic humanist based on any happy optimism as to the possibility of his inducing human beings to give the consolation and strength which transcendent theism professes to be able with the greatest ease to supply. He is fully aware that if we are to shut off communion with a superhuman and supernatural agency and to limit ourselves only to the fellowship of man, we make temporarily an

awful blank in our lives. While declaring the transcendent deity to be unverifiable, we find that the immanent deity is in great part only a possibility—is by no means a fully realised fact. We discover that the immanent deity is what can be and ought to be, rather than what is. With a sense of terror it is revealed to us, that our immanent God is potential rather than actual. Man is not standing ready to receive us as the infinite Creator was said to be. And when we are admitted to the fellowship of good men, and of all men so far as they are good, it is to no such banquet as that to which we believed ourselves to sit down, when we imagined ourselves the welcomed guests of a superhuman God.

This awful blank which the rejection of a transcendent deity leaves behind is what old-fashioned believers call the awful blank of Atheism. That it is awful there can be no doubt ; it is a dreary waste and a desolation ; men stepping into it are prone to shudder and draw back. But in very truth it is the awful blank of Inhumanity ; it is the realising horror of the absence of Man from our heart. No religious humanist, however, would deny that it is also Atheism, that it is the absence of God ; but only because the Good in Man is his God, and therefore the absence of Man is the absence of his God. This blank was never meant to be filled with the light and life of a transcendent deity, but with the warmth and love, the laughter and song, the rain and the dew, the moon and the stars of human love. And to doubt that human love might and ought to fill up the loneliness we feel when we turn away from the superhuman lover and find ourselves barred out from human fellowship, is moral infidelity.

Yes, the sense of being aliens in this world is the void of Atheism ; and to escape it, one may fly to another

world and find one's spiritual communion there. But, instead of flying from the void, one can and ought to fill it; and one ought to fill it with nothing else than human love and fellowship. To fly to a transcendent deity is to give up the good fight, to become reconciled to evil, to desert one's post, to shirk the human task. In short, the doctrine of a transcendent deity as a loving friend is anti-social and anti-human. The superhuman, when it usurps the place belonging by divine right to the human, must be anti-human. Belief in superhuman love has retarded for ages the coming in of universal brotherhood, and is inimical to the interests of the poor and the oppressed. If men have the peace and strength that come of communion with a transcendent person, they inevitably have so much the less need of fellowship in the inner moral life with men; their craving for spiritual sympathy is gratified although they have opened their heart to no man. Mankind is cheated of the purest love in the human breast—the desire for holy communion—whenever that desire is satisfied by spiritual intimacy with any being outside of the human family.

I am aware that the transcendent theologian will say that, if we love an infinite superhuman spirit whose will is love, we cannot help loving our fellow-men; for that spirit loves them, and we offend and grieve him if we neglect one of the least of his. According to this process of reasoning, to love an infinite, invisible, incomprehensible person is the mainspring to the service of mankind. We are asked, "If a man loveth not God whom he hath not seen, how can he love his brother whom he hath seen?" But the New Testament writer of the converse of this would, I am sure, have replied that such a question was begotten not of moral experience and insight but of dogmatic insolence; and that the questioner should

be rebuked and healed of wilful blindness, that he might see for himself.

The transcendent theists represent their God as loving the world directly, so that the sight of its suffering pains him and the sight of its joy makes him glad. But instead of summoning us to similar godlike love and readiness to sacrifice, they enjoin upon us a direct love only towards One who does not need us, and cannot suffer except by sympathy. They do not summon us so to love the world that we shall give our only begotten for it, but only to love another who so loved the world that he was ready for its sake to give his only begotten. In their minds, however, is confusion worse confounded; for unless deep down we too love the world and love it directly, originally and vitally, how does it come about that the Creator, when conceived as loving it, so excites our awe? How is it that a human heart cannot hear of anyone's loving it, without stealing out to him in joyful recognition of spiritual kinship and even identity? We know at a flash and feel irresistibly, and therefore need no proof, that all creatures that suffer are ours, and that if anyone is merciful unto the least of them he is so unto us. The humanist in religion does not deny the beauty of the conception which the transcendent theist holds as to the character of the Creator. On the contrary, he sees that it is the perfect human character projected outwards. It is a vision which the human soul throws up from its own depths on to the clear blue sky of prophetic meditation. But, knowing its immanent source, he resents with his whole soul's protest the attempt to attribute to it an outside source and reality, as if it belonged to another world and could come to man only by revelation from beyond himself. No sadder error has ever been committed by human wit than to mistake the ideal of

divine love and self-sacrifice for a reality that comes to man instead of one that is coming from man and is but man not yet made. Our God is potent ; he is energy, he is zest and joy ; he is the soul of man anticipating itself ; he is our moral nature, now hidden in unconsciousness, lifting itself like a new continent into the light of being.

In the first place, then, the defect of transcendent theism is that in satisfying emotionally a man's need of spiritual sympathy, it renders him independent of the spiritual help of his fellow-men. It thus strikes a blow at the highest sort of dependence of man upon man. But its second and worse effect is that in relieving a man of his need of others, it destroys his sense of his highest responsibility towards others. If I do not need my fellow-mortals in order to experience the peace and strength of the highest spiritual communion, they in turn cannot need me. Not needing me, they have no spiritual claim upon me. Let them also look to the transcendent deity, and leave me free and at peace from their clamourings and their soul-hungers. It is a tremendous relief from responsibility and annoyance, to feel that a superhuman deity is infinitely solicitous, alert, and efficacious in attending to the soul-needs of the outcasts of society, the abandoned, the vulgar who offend our taste. But herein lies the greatest evil of supernaturalistic religion. The Creator is doing, it says, the very thing—or is willing to do it if we let him—which we ought to do ; he is stooping with infinite tenderness and love over every erring soul. Now, whether this be a fact or not we need not attempt to argue ; but of this we may be sure, and this it is important to assert, that if a transcendent deity is doing the very thing which we ought to do, it is incumbent upon us to resent such action upon his part as an unpardonable encroachment upon our spiritual domain. We must

claim our moral right, and not permit him to usurp our place. The Good in Man is a jealous God.

That the doctrine of a deity not conterminous with the best in man has had a degrading influence by feeding the human need for love from illicit sources, is the only explanation for the apathy of devout supernaturalists towards the social needs of our day, and for their comparative overlooking of natural and human means of redemption. It is the duty of religious men to deny themselves strenuously the gratification of communion with a transcendent deity, in order to drive them to solicit from others and to hasten to offer to others the strength and inspiration of spiritual fellowship. But let us not for a moment concede that in abandoning a transcendent source of redemption they would be abandoning the divine. Let us not for a moment set the human over-against the divine. By such a use of thoughts and phrases we should be playing into the hands of the supernaturalists and confusing the common judgment. Let us teach that the truly human is the only divine. Then many a heart will be touched to come out of its solitary worshipping-place, which would otherwise have felt no demand upon it to seek its God in the hearts of men.

Against this analysis of transcendent theism and this condemnation of its moral defects, the believer in it will be ready to defend himself. He will declare that, as a fact illustrated in the lives of men, belief in a transcendent deity does not weaken men's sense of their own responsibility; he will point to the fact that those who love a superhuman Creator most are the ones who love man most. But here again is a case where no citing of past religious experiences can constitute a convincing argument. For until our own day men have been forbidden to identify the best in man with the divine. The possible

absence, therefore, of instances of holy persons who have not believed in a supernatural deity is perhaps itself a great evidence of the inhumanity of transcendent theism. Why are such persons nowhere to be cited? Why is there no trace of the humanist thy brother? What hast thou done? If thou hast not slain him, perhaps thou hast done worse, in not having permitted him to live out his life.

If, in like manner, we are asked to cite proofs that a humanistic religion would be adequate in meeting the higher spiritual needs of men, we may in the same way point to the failure of transcendent theism. Had it succeeded, the awful blank of human lovelessness would not to-day exist. To annihilate this blank was its object. We may therefore cite the inhumanity of man as evidence of the fatal inhumanity of spiritistic religion. We would point to the countless numbers of human beings who are not born of love and who are kept alive only because they cannot be got rid of without danger. These, instead of constituting a plea for supernatural religion, condemn it beyond reprieve. It cannot be permitted any longer to boast of the thousands upon thousands of human beings who, if they ever come to know the joy of being loved and cherished, find it only in an ideal friendship with a Spirit not of this world. It is undeniable that many a human heart just on the brink of despair has been caught back and saved by the thought that, although to no human being, yet to an infinite Creator, it is precious. It turns to him and finds solace and strength; it owes him everything. But who, to-day, can fail to detect the unconscious mockery in the boast of the triumph of such a scheme of salvation? After its domination in the imagination of men for ages, millions of human souls are living in daily contact, and yet the only friend that many

of them can boast is a superhuman and a supernatural spirit ! In the sight of this sad state of things and the fear that it may last always, who can forbear from crying out in protest ? Who dare discourage the hope that a new religion, scientific, humanistic, democratic, ethical, will, instead of preaching allegiance to a personal agent beyond the organism of human society, preach the saving power and the personal responsibility of each man for all men, and all for each ? Who can doubt that this gospel of the immanent deity will inspire thousands to go forth and offer, in all humility, the best they have—themselves—instead of pointing to another ? It is quite true that in an ethical, humanistic religion all depends upon its disciples, whether its gospel be mighty to save or not. But religions which have not depended upon their disciples have failed ; they dare not raise a finger to prevent the experiment of a naturalistic scheme of redemption—at least, so far as the craving for, and the responsibility of offering, spiritual fellowship are concerned.

4. A fourth point, in which transcendent theism would boast of its interpretation of the Power to whom the Lord's Prayer is addressed, is that only according to its scheme of moral redemption is God capable of being represented as an ever-watchful eye. The Creator is pictured as a special committee for moral vigilance. The people are told and believe that there is one above who knows everything that is going on. The wickedest heart and the foulest den of iniquity are open to him ; he is there watching ; he sees the concoctings of evil in the solitary brain as well as in secret groups of men. All the fiendish traps that are every day set and successfully sprung upon the unsuspecting, the weak, and the ignorant—plots which society now in general learns of only when it is too late—he is aware of from the beginning. Not

only this, but he keeps strict record of all offences done, and in his own good time will appear as witness for or against every man of us, every city and every nation.

This idea has had a mighty influence, at least in securing outward conformity to goodness, in the restraint of overt acts of evil. It has kept men up to the line of duty. Nor, as it seems to me, can it be wholly condemned because it appeals to a motive relatively lower than direct love of doing right and of disinterested beneficence. The fear of being caught is undoubtedly a relatively low motive ; indeed, in the best of men it might not act as a motive at all. But a scheme of salvation is to be tested pre-eminently by its efficiency in acting upon men who have not yet reached the highest state of moral evolution, and who therefore find that the highest motives are in them the weakest. It may safely be maintained that if no other means in the place of appeals to man's natural dread of being caught at his evil-doing could be established, the great mass of mankind would sink back into animalism or fly into reckless anarchy. The humanist in religion, then, must meet on its own premiss this argument as to the practical efficiency of appealing to the fear of being caught. And this he is able to do. He can undoubtedly show himself able to appeal to the fear of consequences more powerfully than through the notion that a supernatural spirit is witnessing and noting men's conduct. Indeed, this idea has always suffered from an inherent and fatal weakness, which becomes more and more apparent the more intelligent the people grow. It depends wholly for its potency upon absolute and unthinking faith in the existence of such an ever-watchful and superhuman detective. But unhappily for it and happily for man, there is no proof in human experience for the existence

of such a being. The supernatural watchman, all will agree, gives no sign of his presence, or such faint ones that only experts in transcendent theism can detect them. The perpetrators of evil, although alert to the slightest approach of danger, never see his shadow cross their path or hear his step. They never even think they see or hear him, except the thought has been suggested to them by the priests of supernaturalism. The superhuman agent's way of hiding himself almost defeats the chief object of humane moral vigilance, which is to anticipate and prevent wrong-doing by making men certain that they are being observed and will be judged. When no one but such a watchman is about, it is, to the man who does not believe in him, strikingly like being alone ; and when people discover that there is no real evidence of any intelligent witness in the universe except man, that idea will lose entirely its practical power. How different, on the other hand, is a scheme of salvation which not only frankly but gladly accepts the fact that, where no man is watching, neither is God watching ; but that where man is watching over his own, there God is watching over his own !

The whole policy of trusting to a superhuman vigilance is further vitiated by the fact that, according to universal experience, the supernatural watchman, however much he may see, never reports on anyone to anyone else. You may be quite sure that, if no one but the Creator saw you do an evil deed, no one will ever find it out, unless you betray yourself or somebody traces the act to you by a natural clue. And this peculiar circumstance renders the situation identical with what it would be, if there were no supernatural detective at all, because even without him others would find you out equally well, if you betrayed yourself or if any other natural way led to

detection. Human society accordingly reaps no benefits from the Creator's record of crime ; for, however much he may know and record, he keeps his book of life locked so safely away that it is inaccessible, and he delays his coming forward with the evidence until the end of the world. In the meanwhile, through the countless ages that to us mortals are like an eternity of time, mischief is doing its sure, quick work ; envy and hatred, pride and malice, passion, greed and wantonness are bringing forth the direfullest shapes of human misery.

No one who realises the human situation so far as this idea of a supernatural detective is concerned, can regret that the notion is losing its hold upon the modern mind ; for that notion has lulled the social conscience into a sleep of false security. Who can doubt that the idea that the Creator without man's agency is ferreting out crime and will some day bring offenders to justice, has dulled good men to the full sense of the necessity of their doing it ? Who can doubt that this is one great reason why, in every city throughout Christendom, vice has been allowed to become systematised and capitalised, and vast numbers of human beings to be made victims of shameless and glaring greed and lust ? Further, who can doubt that, with the throwing off of trust in an intelligent agency outside of man, there will come a utilisation of hitherto neglected power in human beings to put an end to evil-doing and to the misery it engenders ? Religious insight will then become identical with practical common sense ; and it will be seen that even one capable man devoting himself to the task, arming himself with a knowledge of the law and organising others, can bring about the washing and cleansing of a whole city or nation, and leave it clothed and in its right mind.

Supernatural religion must prove to the scientific imagination that it has not dissipated the moral forces of society by turning them into useless channels ; for all logic and common sense indicate that it has.

A humanistic religion offers, in the place of supernatural vigilance, an adequate increase of men's vigilance ; in the place of a presence unseen, unheard and intangible, but merely believed in, a presence actually seen and felt and touched, and seeing, feeling and touching ; living men and women, singly and banded together, looking, noting, warning, condemning, preventing, rescuing and inspiring. The dread of being caught by one's fellow-men, when well founded in everyday experience, is the strongest check that can be found to the evil impulses of evil men. The possibility of incurring the contempt even of strangers holds us back from our sweetest transgressions ; and the thought of the merest chance of being found out by those who respect us and tenderly love us cuts into the soul like a knife ; it spreads sharp pain through the finest pleasure, so that we recoil from our fondest schemes. It is a profound pity that more use is not made of this impulse to appear noble and pure to the fellow-mortals who believe us to be so. It is a moral calamity that the chances of not being caught are so very great. "I die content," were the triumphant last words of a criminal, "for I assumed a false name, and my family will never hear of my disgrace." At present, every man's neighbours leave whole tracts of his character and conduct unexplored, although within easy reach of their inspection ; and the alert and cunning evil in him takes advantage of the fact. On principle, the majority of honest men and women allow free sweep to vice and crime and rank injustice, if only it does not despoil their own household. So far as their own personal interference

goes, citizens in general give over the community at large to iniquity. Note the bold insolence with which the capitalists of crime openly defy the laws, and the mocking manner in which the abettors of drunkenness and lust and legal extortion flaunt in our face the boast that no one dares molest their traffic. Yet all that is needed to put an end to such alarming features of modern life is that the good in men and women should cease to be passive. Then not a street, not a shop, not a house, not a room, would remain unvisited by the providence of man. Then instead of the laughter of defiant vice and the wail of violated innocence, in place of the sighing of women and children and the threats of vengeance for injustice done, would rise on every side an anthem at once of joyful human trust and of thanksgiving to the God of our salvation. That such a scheme of deliverance from misery and sin entails upon men a duty and a responsibility which the missionaries of supernaturalism were not required to feel can, from an ethical point of view, be counted as no defect in it. Indeed, it is inevitable that, for every doctrine which we must give up because it inculcated trust in moral agencies beyond man, men must themselves assume a new and corresponding responsibility. When the Power that saves becomes immanent and identical with man, it does not cease to perform the offices of God ; nay, on the contrary, now more than ever—

“Look unto me and be ye saved !” saith God :
“I strike the rock, outstreats the life-stream at my rod !
Be your sins scarlet, wool shall they seem like—although
As crimson red, yet turn white as the driven snow !”

Those who identify the Being to whom the Lord's Prayer is addressed with the Good in Man stand to the champions of a transcendent deity as did Elijah to the

prophets of Baal. They say to these, "Call ye on the name of your God, and we will call on the name of the Lord ; and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God." What is the whole contention between old-fashioned creeds of religion and modern science but this ? The believers in an intelligent agency beyond the living organism of human society are saying, "O Baal, hear us !" but there has been no voice, nor any that answered. And now it is towards the noonday of science and of social democracy, of belief in the goodness and power of man ; and Elijah is beginning to mock the priests of a supernatural deity. He is saying, "Cry aloud : for he is a god ; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked." Yet the Elijah of to-day knows that the only true God is always in a journey when men are in a journey, and always sleepeth when men are asleep, and must be awaked. Knowing this, Elijah is beginning to stop men's talking and call them back from their pursuing and shake them out of their sleep ; and he is challenging the priests of Baal : "The God that answereth by fire—by the fire that leaps from human hearts—the Lord who worketh not except through human instrumentalities, he is the God." For if the God of supernaturalism, as I have said before, never does anything of himself—if he never puts any extra weights into the scale on the side of justice and love, if he never rights anything over and above what men do, if he never acts except through men—it all comes to the same thing as if he did not act at all ; and we find ourselves back on the solid rock of a faith wholly humanistic and naturalistic.

5. When we analyse experience more deeply than was done by those who brought into vogue the traditional commonplaces of religious doctrine and exhortation, there

is something almost humorous in the way the arguments ordinarily brought forward to support conventional opinion suddenly transform themselves into arguments against it. The solemn manner in which it has been urged as a point in favour of a transcendent deity, that he is able to do for us infinitely more than could any spiritual will of the community under cosmic law, becomes ludicrous when we suddenly discover that, from the point of view of a nation's welfare, those things which only a deity above man and nature could grant us, are the very things which no wise statesman, no disinterested and humane patriot, would tolerate that his people should pray for. The things beyond the power of granting by the spiritual organism of society through natural means are interests antagonistic to the social well-being of a nation. From them the people's attention must be diverted by educators and nation-builders, in the interests of posterity and of the establishment of the kingdom of heaven upon earth. If, without bias against the idea of a transcendent deity but wholly in the service of his people, a statesman were to indicate those concerns which are most liable to weaken and waste the best energy of the nation, we should find them to be, in the main, the interests which the upholders of transcendent theism have been systematically turning the attention of the people towards for some thousands of years—a life after death, and the nature and purposes of an agent whose ways are not our ways, but, whatever they may be, are past finding out. The immanent God who is the life-giving principle that builds up families, nations and societies, and advances science, art and the virtues, is verily a jealous God. And now that men are waking up to a knowledge of his real nature, they will inevitably in his name condemn, as false religion, all spiritual solicitude about a life after death for oneself or others, or about

the secret nature of the supposed reality beyond verification. Just as in ancient times the social conscience rose up and beat down the offering of thousands of rams and tens of thousands of rivers of oil, so in the name of the God of Nations it will now tolerate no preoccupation with a life after death or a spirit beyond experience.

From the point of view of national idealism, the argument in favour of a transcendent deity, that he is at the same time immanent, cannot be allowed to pass muster. It is the immanent God that is jealous of the God transcendent. Not that in and of itself the transcendent may not exist : for the God of Nations, like the God of ancient Israel, in forbidding the worship of anything beyond himself, does so not on the ground that other beings which have been set up are non-existent, but rather on the ground that, whether they be existent or not, it is from the social point of view illicit to worship them, and that, if they actually exist, the worship of them is still more reprehensible. To worship a nothing cannot be so antagonistic to social welfare as to worship a foreign something which may get a positive grip of the soul and communicate to it extra-social satisfactions. Such being the case, it is not enough for the metaphysician to show that the transcendent exists. The ordered cosmos is the only legitimate power and medium of communication among human souls. Nor, in the hearts of those whose religion consists of national idealism, will it add to the weight of the argument in favour of the transcendent—but, on the contrary, detract from it—that this transcendent part of that which in its immanent phase is the cohesive principle of society, is of the nature of love and pity, and dwells in a City and inspires a Nation of the Blest, in comparison with which England and all the tribes of the earth are as nothing. The spirit that has made England and is unifying all the

nations of the world will tolerate no hint of disparagement as to the infinite worth of devotion to the great causes of human perfection on earth. Nor will it tolerate any hope or any attempt at self-realisation on the part of individual men and women, except through service to the mundane Heaven.

My contention has here been that it is wrong for men to ask for anything which the immanent deity cannot give them. But one must meet the implication often made against such a restriction, that it is only a transcendent deity who can lavish the highest and the perfect gifts ; that beggarly indeed will be man's life if he shuts himself off from the transcendent. The implication is made that, when you have excluded the transcendent, there is almost no power left, and that nine-tenths of the glory of life is eclipsed. The only way to check such a blunder is to open the eyes of the blind, that they may see the potentialities sleeping at the heart of man and the universe, and therefore in the bosom of God immanent. To the secular imagination, the resources of the universe which are opened up to the will of man, when it is scientifically trained, are infinite and majestic—both in their outward manifestation and in the resources which they bring to the relief and the perfecting of man's estate. Indeed, it was the might of the universe and the majesty of man which induced the belief in an infinite Creator ; yet so jealous have become the worshippers of a transcendent source of the universe, that, in order to show him honour and glory, they scorn the very ground from which sprang their anthems to the transcendent.

If anyone, however, in order to disparage the worship of the indwelling principle of social life, should attempt to show how very weak it has always been, and how rampant have been the anti-social forces in man and nature, he

would be guilty of a vicious form of reasoning, due to his habit of transcendent theologising. He cannot imagine that one would be willing to concede any limitations to the power, and the manifestation of the power, of one's own God. But the humanist can quite consistently concede that the power he worships has in the actual life of men been very weak—scarcely more than a babe in a manger. He also is perfectly ready to concede—indeed, anxious to insist—that this redeeming deity is wholly dependent upon individual men and women devoted to the cause of the good in the world. Without them his deity is nothing. But he will hasten to show that, as the number of the socially self-sacrificing grows and their insight deepens, the immanent deity increases in the manifestation of strength. He will also hasten to demonstrate that there are no assignable limits to the might, majesty, dominion and power which the good in the world may ultimately attain ; for the whole universe of forces and energies is lying at our feet, ready to do our bidding the moment our intelligence shall understand its nature.

6. Another illustration of the way in which old-fashioned arguments, long used to defend the belief in a transcendent deity, now suddenly right-about-face, is seen in the controversy in reference to anthropomorphic tendencies in religion. One of the strongest reasons against Christian theism brought forward by philosophical critics has always been that the Christian God was anthropomorphic. For a God to be anthropomorphic, it was argued, was enough to prove him unworthy to be a God ; and Christian apologists of the broad-minded and philosophical type have for centuries tried to explain away the seeming anthropomorphism of the language of the Bible, and interpret it into some sort of compatibility with what reason inevitably required of an infinite, trans-

cedent, superhuman and supernatural deity. More and more of late, Christian theists have been won over to a metaphysic which strips their deity of all lovable and indeed of all definable or even thinkable attributes. Many have frankly professed themselves agnostic in the Spencerian sense. They have not been ashamed to worship an unknowable being. Others have adopted the language of the transcendental idealists, and interpret the Christian God to be outside of time and space, above the categories of human understanding, and beyond all such distinctions as those of good and bad, right and wrong—which are said to be mere forms for the valuations of finite consciousness.

Now it must be conceded that a transcendent deity, in so far as he is transcendent, must be incomprehensible ; and that no qualitative or quantitative statement can be made about him without involving in hopeless self-contradiction the intellect which affirms it. But when we turn to consider the attributes and limits of an immanent deity, anthropomorphism ceases altogether to be a blunder either of intellect or of heart. It is no longer an attempt to clothe the unspeakable in language, the unthinkable in thought, and the infinite in terms of the finite. When one's God is the cause of the good in man under cosmic law, there need be only one limitation to a complete and absolute anthropomorphism, and that limitation is an ethical necessity set by the identification of the Being one worships with Goodness and the Tendency to Goodness. Only one characteristic of man is shut out from the nature of the immanent God, and that is man's badness ; and only those forces of the outward universe are outside of God which are inevitably against righteousness in their effects. Man and nature, so far as they are good or make for the good, constitute a reality not only man in

form but man in substance. The weakness and finiteness of the immanent God is, even from the logical point of view, no occasion for distress or confusion to his worshippers. Those who incline to identify the good in man with God are no such worshippers of power as to be agonised simply on the score that their deity is not infinite and that he could not by a mere fiat of his will puff out the universe and man. They are not so much in love with power that they would be willing to sacrifice the goodness of their God in order to parade him as infinite. They are under no logical constraint to prove that evil is only tolerated passively by their deity ; for he does not tolerate it at all. They are quite ready to concede that, if their God but could, he would put an instantaneous end to the bad in the human heart, and all those trends of circumstance which work to the disadvantage of man. They are not ashamed to admit that, if only their God were able, he would hasten the process of the upward evolution of human society, and would do more in a year than he has been able to accomplish in a hundred thousand years. Indeed, the weakness of their God intensifies their loyalty to his service. They have no desire to desert him because he is not as mighty as he is good.

One of the great services to the devout and searching thought of our age which the doctrine of an immanent deity can render, is that it at last resolves the supposed antagonism between divinity and humanity. It ends the feeling that in the Being one worships one must sacrifice human attributes in order that he shall seem divine, and that one must strip man of divine attributes lest he should seem impiously to arrogate to himself the functions of divinity.

An interesting side result of identifying the good in man with the Power to whom the Lord's Prayer is

addressed, is the rescue of the so-called anthropomorphism of the New Testament from the danger of being thrown by modern statesmen to the scrap-heap. If I am right in thinking that the reality to which Christ in the Lord's Prayer pointed his disciples was social justice as the unifying principle which organises men socially, nearly everything which has recently become discredited in his sayings, on the ground that it was anthropomorphic, now not only rises above fantasy and fiction, but transcends the realm of poetry and becomes a scientifically accurate delineation of the Unifying Will of the Community.

The immediate context of the Lord's Prayer in Luke has been a source almost of humiliation to the transcendent theist, on account of its seemingly unrestrained and rank anthropomorphism. But the moment one interprets humanistically the power addressed in the Lord's Prayer, the language becomes one more proof of the profound psychic and social insight of Jesus—or at least of the writer of Luke. For the very characteristics which Jesus is said to ascribe to the power to whom he urges his disciples to pray—while wholly inapplicable to the Infinite (for we all know what that is not)—fit, as a mask does the face it was moulded on, the well-known features of the organised will of a community. Having taught his disciples to pray, Christ “said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves ; for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him ? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not : the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed ; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet

because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth."

Now, of the General Will of the Community, more or less consciously organised and centralised in the government of a city or state, it is true that it will often help us, not because it is our friend or because we are deserving and have a claim, but on condition that we tease it and obtrusively demonstrate to it that we do not mean to stop importuning until our request is granted. But if Jesus meant that the transcendent Creator because of our importunity heeds our requests, he must either have been inexperienced or had a totally different experience from mortals to-day. It simply is not a fact that anything comes to us without a natural cause; and, as to natural causes, when no living human agent is working through them, the quality in them which strikes everyone who does not avert his eyes is (as John Stuart Mill said) "their perfect and absolute recklessness. They go straight to their end without regarding what or whom they crush on the road." Not even importunity influences them! This quality Emerson indicated in saying, "Diseases, the elements, fortune, gravity, lightning, respect no persons; . . . everything is dealt to us without fear or favour after severe universal laws." More poetically did Matthew Arnold warn us concerning the inconsiderateness of sub-human nature:

Streams will not curb their pride
The just man not to entomb,
Nor lightnings go aside
To leave his virtues room;
Nor is that wind less rough which blows a good man's barge.

Likewise the great and tender lover of nature, Richard Jefferies, after picturing the life of the poor in winter,

cries out, "No kindness to man, from birth-hour to ending ; neither earth, sky, nor gods care for him innocent at the mother's breast. Nothing good to man but man ! Let man then leave his gods and lift his ideal above them." Could the metaphysical thinking of Jesus have been so superficial that he did not feel a moral contradiction between the attributes of an infinite person who could have created sub-human nature ruthless, and of a finite person who, although he will not rise and give because his disposition is friendly, will respond to importunity ? But man is undoubtedly moved by importunity ; nor is this to his moral discredit. For it is of the nature of finite intelligence that its power of attention is limited ; if it turns to one point, it must draw off its power of appreciation from others. Not to respond until importuned, therefore, is no proof of obliquity or imbecility in a finite mind ; and any resentment at not receiving immediate attention is idle, and argues inexperience or a failure to understand the organic economy of finite mental activities.

Now, what is true of the individual mind is true of the general mind, and for the same reason. In the nature of things, it is at times preoccupied, and must lapse at others into a state of repose. Therefore, if Christ identified God with the social conscience, his reasoning was irrefutable ; and those who on other grounds believe in his moral sanity will find in the new interpretation which we are able to give to the context of the Lord's Prayer an added reason for their faith in him.

7. In the preceding section I have incidentally touched upon the limitation which the worshipper of the good in the world sets to his deity in excluding everything bad. But I did not imply that in experience the good is actually separated from the bad. The transcendent theist thinks

he is able to offer a strong argument in favour of his deity, in that it is infinitely separated from sin and evil and from the blindness and folly of human incapacity ; and he imagines himself able to find a cogent objection to the worship of a wholly immanent deity in this fact, that the good in man is inextricably intermixed with moral evil. There is no denying that human goodness seems even vitally bound up in the same self-consciousnesses with badness, insomuch that an individual agent may never be certain of the perfect purity of his own highest motives. In the same human breast where the yearning for social service exists even to the degree of willingness to die for the world, there may lurk, ready to spring forth at any chance of gratifying themselves, anti-social appetites and selfish ambitions. How, it may be asked, can one worship as a God goodness which is vitally connected with evil ?

In reply it must be noted that, however much champions of a transcendent deity may boast that an infinite Creator is not vitally and inextricably intermixed with moral badness, they cannot free him from responsibility for it ; and it were, therefore, a better credential for him if he were vitally intermixed with it. That he, having created the world good, should have allowed it (although only as an inevitable condition to virtue) to turn bad and by free will to continue evil, is acknowledged to be a moral riddle by the most devout believers in him ; and the wisest of them discreetly confess that the problem baffles them ; they do not pretend to explain how it is morally possible for an infinitely good and omnipotent Creator to tolerate moral evil in finite minds. They can preserve their faith intact only by having recourse to the thought that purposes are served which transcend all human comprehension. But, as he permits evil to continue, the one

thing that would seem incumbent upon the transcendent Creator would be, to penetrate so closely and vitally into contact with it that he would be as near to it as the Good in Man undeniably is. For one great hope of ultimately annihilating sin and checking its consequences is the vital connection of good with evil. It is no misfortune if the God we pray to is so close to the bad that the bad must always overhear our prayer and feel through itself the responsive outrush of God. It will be prayer to a God immanent in consciousnesses not wholly good, which will convert the powers now directed to evil, to the service of the Good.

CHAPTER IV

THE LORD'S PRAYER : THE PETITIONS AND THE PETITIONERS

HAVING examined the points of likeness and difference between my own and the old conception of the power addressed in the Lord's Prayer, I may be permitted to assume that my reader is willing, at least for argument's sake, to grant the expediency of turning the reverent attention of the people systematically to all the good in the world as the source of redemption. I may further assume his assent to the necessity of direct addresses to this power, expressive of praise and gratitude, and of petitions for blessings. Furthermore, if we were now to find upon analysis that the petitions contained in the Lord's Prayer, and the characteristics implied in it as inherent in the suppliants, were the very ones which, if it were used as the national supplication, would best train the minds of the people to social service, we should be constrained to retain for it its ancient pre-eminence in the Prayer Book. Let us, then, consider every detail of it which can have any bearing upon the question before us.

1. Are the first two words of the Lord's Prayer the most suitable as an appellation for a deity identical with human goodness ?

Like the word God itself, the word Father points to

no quality inherent in the being designated ; it is a relational term ; that is, it refers only to some connection between the power indicated and human beings. A father is primarily one by whom a human being's body is begotten, and secondarily and commonly one by whom both body and mind are, at least in part, supplied with the means of development. One might reason, then, that legitimately a figurative use of the word would be its application to any thing or idea which was an active factor in bringing into existence and sustaining, in another being, any quality or aspect. But this is not all. Dependence upon its father for its nature and nurture arouses in the consciousness of a child, either spontaneously or upon inculcation, a sense of indebtedness, gratitude and reverence, and an active opening of its heart to the father and a direct asking for advice and help. Accordingly, a full figurative use of the word Father would appropriately apply it to any being towards which we look in gratitude, reverence and hope, because we have derived from it our nature and nurture. Undoubtedly the Greeks called Zeus "Father" because their conscious attitude towards him was like the attitude of a child to its parent, and the grounds for their attitude were similar to a child's. Was not this the whole reason, also, why the Christians called their God "Father" ? If, however, it now turns out that the Christian God is all the good in man and nature, analogy renders the epithet more appropriate than ever before. For each individual human being, all the stored-up good in the world is the begetter both of his body and soul. The body is due to the sum-total of all the lifeward influences in the universe, and not simply to the one human being specified as Father. As to his physical nurture, also, how could the child even live, if all other means in the universe were withdrawn

except those provided by the parent? And will a man who has grown conscious of his dependence upon all beneficent influences, and who is moved to gratitude towards all immanent good, limit the denotation of the term father to one human being? The more one synthesises the elements of the case, the more one begins to feel that to call all the good in the world "Father" is not so much the transference of a term by poetic analogy as the literal and scientific extension of it; and in the fact that faith in the immanent good is immune from the weakening effects of philosophic scepticism and is justified by experience, we have one more ground for calling the good in the world our Father. Indeed, had Greek and Jew and Christian never designated their deities in this manner, we should none the less be constrained now to appropriate the term. Although the statesmen of the next generation may sweep the Bible from our schools and turn against the customs of the Church, they will be compelled by the interests of the State and by inner truth to teach not only the young but adults to revere human goodness and all that tends towards it, as a child reveres a father, and therefore to call it "Father."

2. Those who accept the Lord's Prayer in the ordinary way, as if its full meaning were patent to the casual listener the first time he hears it, may think that in the clause which immediately follows the words "our Father" is to be found an utter refutation of the proposition that the prayer was really addressed to a divinity identical with the good in man on earth. For does not the prayer itself, at the very outset, distinctly say that it is addressed to a being that is in heaven? And is not heaven a term that clearly points away from anything on earth? Indeed, in the third petition of the prayer, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," heaven is set over-against earth

in a way that proves, it is said, that it must mean another locality, and must refer, if not to a life after death, at least to eternity and a different order of existence from this mundane one. But here, as elsewhere in religion, an intimate knowledge of how the human mind in general expresses itself entirely solves the puzzle created by a phrase.

Let us analyse any situation that could give rise to a supplication for help to the good in man. The very fact that one is moved to pray implies a discontent with one's actual conditions, inward or outward, and also a standard on the part of the petitioner, in comparison with which he becomes aware by how much the actual falls short of his ideal. When he petitions, he is really asking that what he sees in his vision of the Perfect shall be embodied as fact in actual life—in his own or that of others. The Perfect—the Good—exists only as yet in the moral imagination. At least it is an abstraction, an ideal construction from mere hints found in the concrete fullness of life. So, too, the tendencies that make for its ultimate embodiment constitute an abstraction; they are distinguished and unified in thought, but in experience are not separated from counteracting forces nor organically bound together. If, then, the Perfect and the forces that favour it are to be called "our Father," we must admit that he exists only in the ideal realm of our imagination, and we must qualify our speech in such a way as to indicate that he does not rule in fact as he does in moral right. He is our Father "in heaven" only.

The contrast between what ought to be and what is, together with the sense that what ought to be is no mere figment of fancy, but is the soul of the actual, is so vital that we could not omit it from any compendious statement of personal and national idealism. In praying to

the good in man we should need to say : "Thy will be done in actual life as in our moral vision we see that it ought to be done."

If we turn to consider the use of the word "heaven" in secular and religious literature in general, we discover that it refers to an ideal state of society as contrasted with actual families, cities and nations. We detect that only a lack of poetic imagination has caused men to interpret the Bible use of the word heaven to mean a real "other world," a different order of actual existence, literally removed in time and space from human life on earth.

But, as I have said, a knowledge of how the human mind expresses itself in general will correct this blunder. Great minds always borrow directly from physical objects and relations words to express moral factors and connections. They, for instance, use the word heaven to mean the inner sky of the moral vision. They must either speak thus figuratively or say nothing to convey their meanings and emotions. Universally, that which is counted desirable, admirable, worthy and perfect is designated as high, and that which is contemptible and despicable as low. What is above us means what is morally not yet attained ; and when we speak of a man's having "high" standards we do not even feel the figurativeness of the words. The high is altogether associated in literature with what is joyful, innocent, pure and rarely attained ; and the low with the opposite.

Not only is this use a psychological necessity of speech, but its justification is embedded in the physical sensations associated with moral moods. Prior to any conscious thought or use of language as a system of signs for communicating ideas, is the spontaneous holding of the head high when hope abounds and a distant goal fixes and tones the spirit. On the other hand, equally radical in

our physical organism is the sinking of the head—yes, even the literal falling down of the whole body—when despair or self-condemnation overcomes us. Emotionally true and inevitable, therefore, is the appellation “most high” to one’s God, to the power to which one looks in confident expectancy for deliverance from evil. Now, the word heaven is but a synonym for the highest—for that part of the visible universe remotest from what is beneath our feet. Here, then, is an adequate reason for the retention of the word in a naturalistic scheme of redemption; but there are other reasons. For it happens that that which is literally above our heads is also supremely splendid to our senses, and still more magnificent to the scientific imagination. So that in associating the moral ideal with the heavens above us we are associating that which is—how else can I express it?—morally most high and of dazzling glory with that which is physically the same. I am ready to concede that for the visualising imagination the moral ideal as far transcends in glory the sun and moon and stars as these the earth beneath our feet; but as we have only the outward universe to use as symbol and illustration, it is no dishonour to the inward that the symbol we choose is not wholly adequate; better inadequacy of expression than speechlessness.

In writing the oft-quoted passage where he specifies the starry heavens above and the moral law within as the two most sublime realities of experience and thought, Immanuel Kant was not led to this association of the ideal of duty with the visible sky by the Bible habit of connecting the two, but by the very nature of things and by his intimate knowledge of astronomy and ethics. And, likewise, it was undoubtedly the deep moral insight of ancient shepherds, together with their knowledge of

the motions of the stars and their use of the stars as lamps and guide-posts at night, that first occasioned and then preserved to us the association of Righteousness with the heavens.

The most interesting connotation of the word heaven, however, is its social implication. In Christian literature it has always meant the ideal of human society. It suggests undoubtedly the bliss of individual persons, but a bliss due to communion. Quite secondary and derived is the identification of heaven with a society of the blest *after death* ; and in the Lord's Prayer the meaning cannot be, "Our Father who art in a life after death," or "Thy will be done on earth as it will be done in our life after death."

Not only distinctively Christian literature but all poetic expression betrays the same delicate intuition which identifies the word heaven with the blissful communion of the good. Ralph Waldo Emerson, for instance, who was wholly incurious as to a life after death, expresses this identification in the noble little poem of three lines which reads :

Oh, what is heaven but the fellowship
Of minds that each can stand against the world
By its own meek and incorruptible will?

We see the same connotation in the words from William Morris's *Dream of John Ball*, which have become a watchword in the Labour movement of England : "Forsooth, brothers, fellowship is heaven, and lack of fellowship is hell." Likewise George Eliot, who wholly rejected the old-fashioned interpretation of one's spiritual aspiration as a desire to leave this world and go to another after death, retained the word heaven when she needed a single term to indicate the spiritual joy of social service.

It was no lack of literary boldness or of positivistic sentiment that caused her to love and use this word :

So to live is heaven :
To make undying music in the world.

May I reach
That purest heaven, be to other souls
The cup of strength in some great agony.

Moreover, the higher criticism of the New Testament must convince everyone that in the consciousness of the first Christians the word heaven had reference not to a life after death, but to a redeemed earth, as pictured in moral vision and expected in moral faith. The entire meaning of all the parables on the Kingdom of Heaven is lost except on such an interpretation. It cannot, therefore, be maintained that to interpret the word heaven in a humanistic and naturalistic sense is to force or distort its original significance in Christian literature.

3. The Lord's Prayer divides itself into two groups of clauses not unlike those of the Decalogue. The first three petitions are strikingly analogous to the first four commandments ; they are in the same sense religious and theological. While the first four commandments demand that there shall be no other God, that no material objects shall be set up for worship, that God's name shall not be taken in vain, and that one day in seven shall be kept in homage of him, the Lord's Prayer opens with demands that the name of the Power invoked be held sacred, that his will be executed among men and his kingdom established. The petition "Hallowed be thy name" is nothing more than a sympathetic chord sounding back in response to the commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."

What I have said in regard to the psychological potency of names, due to their association with the things they signify, makes it possible for my comment here to be brief. Every advance in science has been rendered possible only by a corresponding increase of precision and accuracy in the use of words. If religion has shown no evolution of language corresponding to that of the terminology of science, it is because of a false conception as to the way of showing respect for a word. To hallow God's name can consist only in never using it without a living and discriminating sense of what it stands for, and thus finding ever new and deeper meanings for it; and the clause "Hallowed be thy name," when thus interpreted, becomes fruitful of the finest mental effects, making the spirit sensitive and alert to realities beyond the face value of the words.

Note the jealousy and the subtlety with which scientific nomenclature is secured against becoming vague and lax. This jealousy shows that the first rule for scientific discipline is "Hallowed be thy name." From the scientific point of view, the opposite of the hallowing is the vulgarisation of a name. Vulgarisation in science is a thing dreaded by its expert devotees, but it is not due primarily to an incapacity on the part of the masses to think or observe or be interested; it is due to their lack of exactitude in speech and skill in using words. Everyday language is adapted only for the commonplace distinctions needed in the rough-and-tumble of practical life; the first step, therefore, in scientific education is a training in definition and in stricter application of terms familiar to the populace.

When moral idealism is recognised by the priests and preachers of England to be the essence of the Church's message and the reason for the Church's existence, it will

be clearly seen that one of the first needs in religion, as in science, is to assert the sanctity of terms. Re-interpretation and revision will then be recognised as one of the first and permanent acts of piety, as a proof of genuine prayer, and as a test of its fulfilment. Piety in the use of terms will mean a fine exactitude in connotation and denotation, always accompanying the word with a direct perception of the reality it stands for and with a reverence worthy of the factor designated. "Hallowed be thy name," then, must stand as the first petition in a prayer addressed to the Power of Righteousness inherent in the nature of things.

4. It is in the second and third petitions, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done," that we particularly find the justification for regarding the Lord's Prayer as a summary of the whole gospel; for the whole gospel was tidings that the kingdom had begun, and that the work of its establishment was now to be completed. The gospel is the joyful summons to the work. There is no occasion here for me to elaborate the arguments which may be cited to justify this interpretation, as I am only speaking in accord with what all unbiassed students of the New Testament to-day declare, and as it is under their tutelage—without originality or authority of my own as an investigator of historic fact—that I have arrived at this view. The question for us is: In a formula which is to be a compendium of scientific and social-democratic idealism, is there as much reason for retaining these two petitions as there was for using them in a scheme of salvation which looked to supernatural agents? It is difficult to see how the change from supernaturalism to naturalism can affect their value, for that change concerns not the end of Christianity but only its means. The goal of humanistic faith and social-democratic vision

being identical with that of the old faiths—the coming of a kingdom of righteousness and the reign of good-will among men—these clauses of the Lord's Prayer have the same value as before. We could not invent a better formula. Further, it is not a new kingdom that the idealistic humanist is building up to-day; it is the same kingdom of which the foundation was laid ages ago by Jesus Christ, and of which the completion has been delayed even until now, for lack of the material resources which science is only now opening up to us, and of the spiritual energies which social democracy is for the first time liberating.

5. In answer to the question, Who may fittingly utter the Lord's Prayer? we find many hints and clues in the prayer itself, as well as in the context of Luke and Matthew.

As to the evidences furnished by the prayer itself, some are discoverable even in its formal structure. As in the commandments the "thou" and the "thy" showed that they were addressed to each individual constituting the nation in his separate moral responsibility, so the "our," the "us" and the "we" in the Lord's Prayer indicate plainly that it is to be uttered by individuals, and yet not in moral isolation from one another, as they are addressed in the Decalogue, but as banded together.

The context of the Lord's Prayer, both in Luke and Matthew, reinforces our conclusion that the suppliants are individuals voluntarily grouped together, and that these are none other than the disciples, who were soon to become propagandists and organisers of the kingdom of God. According to Matthew, as we have seen, it was when Christ was withdrawn with the disciples alone that he gave the Sermon on the Mount, in which is inserted the prayer. According to Luke, he gave it to one disciple

for all of them. And the prayer in its contents is plainly and pre-eminently appropriate to members of the organisation Jesus founded, or of any other which is closely analogous or identical in principle and aim. Indeed, the second and third petitions are little more than varying forms of each other, each expressing the desire of the Apostles that the work to which they have committed themselves may prosper.

It will be noticed that I have not been asking for whom exclusively the use of the Lord's Prayer is appropriate. One may well recognise the legitimacy of its use by persons whose situation and purpose it does not perfectly fit. Yet, in proportion as the situation and character of the suppliants deviate from those of an organised band of spiritual reformers of society, the prayer fails of import. This principle, however, has been wholly overlooked in the general practice of Christians, and thereby the specific significance of the prayer has been obscured.

For instance, the universal practice of teaching little children to utter this as their private, personal supplication night and morning betrays a lack of discrimination. Had not an uncritical acceptance converted the Lord's Prayer into a universal talisman, beautiful and inspiring supplications, as well fitted to the circumstance and character of little children as was this prayer to that of the disciples, would have been devised ages ago and brought into general use. I anticipate that a deeper insight and reverence for the Lord's Prayer will lead to a reservation of it for those who are mature enough fully to understand the import of its clauses, and who have positively committed themselves by public avowal to the coming of the Kingdom on earth. Then little children may be allowed to hear others utter this prayer, but will be taught to count it so sacred that they cannot

yet enter into the privilege of using it as their own daily petition. The only justification for the practice of drilling children by its daily recitation is that thus it will enter so deeply into their minds that when the mature years come for self-conscious dedication, their subjective attitude will be prepared. But it is a question whether the daily use of words which do not fit the personal situation at the time may not have the very opposite effect to that desired. It is a common observation that persons may utter a set form of prayer throughout their youth and yet, if the supplication has been superimposed by another's will and does not express their own inner purpose and outer situation, may reject it with abhorrence when their judgment ripens. Now, every clause of the Lord's Prayer contains elements inapt for a child. It is not, for instance, appropriate that a person under the age of fourteen, whose will, foresight and experience of life must be relatively nothing, should begin a night and morning invocation with the words "we," "us" and "our," instead of "I," "me" and "mine." Who are the "we" with whom a child could identify himself? It is the growing consciousness of self which is the child's supreme concern, and the supplications should lead him to a sense of his individual relations, duties, trials and privileges. At least the first two even of the doggerel lines,

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep,

are nearer the inner truth of a child's life and need than is the Lord's Prayer; and if the two following lines,

If I die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take,

do not seem so suitable, nevertheless it would be easy to

discover a modern analogue to this expression of the confident and peaceful surrender of oneself, in the act of falling asleep, to the large enfolding influences from which the child has derived its nature and is receiving its nourishment and happiness.

Possibly the epithet "Father" in the Lord's Prayer has suggested the notion that its series of supplications must somehow be appropriate for a child. This notion, although quite a logical deduction—since the word "father" is correlative to the word "child"—betrays an absence of delicate sensitiveness to the fitness of things. If mothers had come to Jesus asking him to teach their little ones how to pray, one cannot imagine that he would have given them the form he gave his disciples, which is patently for the use of persons morally mature and dedicated to the cause of the good in the world. Only such "children" could call the spiritual power that organises human society "Father."

There is no implication anywhere in the prayer that the metaphor of father implies immaturity and inexperience on the part of the children supplicating. The prayer does not presuppose that those who use it are relatively ignorant, confused, vague or half blind, or are conscious of any such deficiencies ; on the contrary, it assumes that they are already fully awakened to selfhood, and have even discovered personal equality and moral identity of purpose with their Father, and feel mystic fellowship with him in spirit. How else could they with sincerity ask that the kingdom should come ?

Thus it follows that another class besides the young are excluded from using the Lord's Prayer with full appropriateness. It is morally impossible that it should be repeated as their own souls' utterance by persons who are not interested in the establishment on earth of such

a society as Jesus and the Apostles were attempting to found. One wholly indifferent to such a work, much more one cynical or even sceptical of the possibility of Christ's scheme, could not say the Lord's Prayer except in absolute unthinkingness or mockingly or hypocritically ; yet other prayers might be both fitting and helpful for the indifferent and the proudly unregenerate, in their hours of affliction and trial.

Indeed, one must affirm that the Lord's Prayer is not an appropriate utterance even for the sinner who is contrite ; for none of its clauses betray the slightest sense of penitence or of any inward ground for penitence. Even the petition for forgiveness of sins is qualified by an assertion of the consciousness of inward integrity. There is, to be sure, no implication that the suppliants are above the possibility of sinning ; nevertheless it is quite clear that they are grown-up men who have begun a new life, and whose new life has taken the form of corporate action with others, to make the world purer, kinder and truer. In the Lord's Prayer it is not the sinful side of the sinner but the redeemed part that is speaking. It is not the sighing of the sufferer or the wail of the morally weak that is heard ; it is the heart of the new life, the new energy—the life of Christ, of his vision and enthusiasm—that pulsates through and through the prayer and gives form and power to it. It is not the bad in man but the good that is asserting itself ; it is not even the good asserting itself against the bad, but the good going out to join itself with the universal good, and challenging that to such a manifestation of power as had never yet been witnessed.

It becomes quite evident that the Lord's Prayer issues from a kingly disposition, from a consciousness of moral sovereignty. It is as if the moral will diffused among the

individuals of a private group of men were appealing to the latent sovereignty and majesty of the community as a whole.

It is a prayer from the God in individual men to the God in churches, cities, nations. No instinct could have been truer than that which has called this prayer the *Lord's*, for it must have been Christ's own personal prayer, the outpouring of his own soul's secret. It, no doubt, manifests a sense of physical dependence and a consciousness of liability to sin and to be ensnared by evil ; but it implies no prostration of a moral inferior before one morally superior. On the contrary, spiritual fellowship of the suppliant with the power entreated—identity of aim and principle—is its dominant note.

It seems to have been overlooked by everyone that the petitions of the Lord's Prayer are all unconditional, or what Kant would have called categorical, imperatives. Indeed, they may just as well be called commandments as prayers, summonses as moral entreaties. I say they are all unconditional, as the prayer "Not my will but thine be done" must inevitably be counted. If one had never before heard the prayer, and were asked, "Are the sentences, 'Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, give us our daily bread, forgive us our sins, lead us not into temptation and deliver us from evil,' commandments or supplications—imperatives or petitions?" the answer would be, "They are moral imperatives." It is wholly inconsistent with the kinds of things asked for to interpret the clauses as if they implied a deferring of the petitioner's judgment to that of the person petitioned. It is inconceivable that the meaning could be, "If it please thee, let thy name be hallowed ; if thou seest fit, let thy kingdom come ; if thou thinkest well of it, feed us for the coming day and forgive us as

we forgive others ; if thou art so disposed, lead us not into temptation and deliver us from evil." The meaning, on the contrary, is evidently, "Thou must make thy name hallowed, thy will done and thy kingdom come ; thou must give us bread for the coming day and forgive us as we forgive ; thou must not lead us into temptation but deliver us from evil." A surrender of their own moral judgment by the suppliants would destroy the worth of the supplication. Spiritual humilities on the part of one uttering this prayer, doubts as to the moral necessity of the things asked for, would be as little in keeping with the character of the petitions as they would be on the part of the being who issued the Ten Commandments. We cannot conceive the commandments made conditional, as if they meant, "Be so kind as not to bear false witness or steal or murder ; do me the favour of honouring thy father and thy mother and regarding righteousness as holy." The tone of the Lord's Prayer is such as can be uttered and felt only by one filled with a mighty purpose of which he is in no wise ashamed ; it is, I repeat, the prayer of one conscious of having grown spiritually identical in character and intent with the universal will which he addresses. By this intuitive self-trust imputed to the petitioners, the Lord's Prayer is shown to issue from the same moral sovereignty which is presented in the Decalogue as issuing that.

Indeed, the sublimity of the prayer is due to the moral worth attributed in it implicitly to the persons expected to use it. It implies that they clearly see what is right, and that what they ask for, they ask for because it is right. Now, in one who desires what ought to be out of love for what ought to be, there can be nothing of the moral slave or beggar. In a person who asks what is right of another because it is right, there can

be no surrender of his own personal identity to that of another, except in so far as he knows that in that other he shall find himself again. When a man desires what is right because it is right, he thereby becomes a free, creative personality ; he may feel his identity with a will larger than his own, but with an accompanying sense of self-expansion. He may be said to do and to want to do what God desires, but this is true of him only because the divinity he worships is immanent in him as well as in others.

The interpretation which I have here given as to the implied spiritual worth of the suppliants who are to utter the Lord's Prayer accords with what I have said in the previous chapter as to the historic evolution of Jewish religion. The consciousness of the good will among men as the redemptive power of nations was now lodged chiefly in the breasts of Christ and his disciples. They were the luminous points of divinity ; but they felt that the light of a perfect day would require a central manifestation of righteousness in the sovereignty of their city and nation, and of all cities and all nations, as organic units of social life.

6. If we turn to analyse in detail the last four petitions of the prayer, we find many indirect confirmations of our interpretation. Take the petition "Give us our bread for the coming day." It reflects with absolute truth—outward and inward—only the life of those who are dedicated as missionaries to the establishment of a kingdom of social justice, and who ask to receive their sustenance for the day, but no more ; and that not as a compensation or reward, but as a means enabling them to continue their work. There will surely come a time when persons who devote the greater part of their brain-power every day to heaping up riches, will attain too much spiritual discrimina-

tion to presume to ask, as they do now, only for bread (which is the symbol of the barest necessities), and that only for the coming day. There is no occasion here to censure those who devote themselves to amassing wealth, but there is cause for suggesting that they should at least omit this clause when they utter the Lord's Prayer. Its utterance by them must confuse the moral judgment and produce intellectual bewilderment as to religious experience and discipline.

The Lord's Prayer does not seem to me to imply that everybody who utters it, besides being a disciple, must also be an apostle—that is, that besides wanting the coming of the kingdom of heaven, he must also make the preaching and organising of it his profession; but its implication is that he at least indirectly devotes his life and fortune to the cause of social righteousness. It is a prayer not simply for priests, and yet it is only for devout people.

This clause asking for bread for the coming day does not necessarily presuppose that the suppliant pursues no trade or business which systematises his effort for wealth beyond the immediate future; yet it cannot be denied that in the request for nothing more than bread for the day a standard of extreme simplicity is set up, and an interest in other ends than those of material abundance and security for the individual is implied. The Lord's Prayer here seems to encourage the professional organiser and preacher of religion to take no thought for the morrow, and possibly to set a standard for all persons whose profession is social service. Nevertheless, there is no implication here or in any other part of the New Testament that the community as a whole should not be provident. In the Kingdom of Heaven no one will be concerned for more than bread for the coming day

on his own account, but the kingdom as a whole, through its central sovereignty, through the national organisation of industry, will provide abundance for all, looking not only years but centuries ahead. Indeed, the only way by which the petition "Give us our bread for the coming day" is ever to be fulfilled and to justify itself, is that the rational good-will among men throughout a nation organised to that end shall become a material providence to every individual person. And it will only be by the reiteration of this prayer, consciously addressed to the community as a State, that its fulfilment will be secured. Still more, the only way by which every human being can get his bread for the coming day will be that no one shall ask or get more for himself. And it would seem that statesmen could find no better way to discipline the young to the true idea of a co-operative commonwealth than early to inculcate this clause of the Lord's Prayer thus interpreted.

It is universally agreed that in this petition bread means all physical necessities of life. Nor is it perhaps an undue repetition of a thought constantly recurring in these pages to say that, however incompatible with modern science and modern humanism the supplication for material blessings may be when addressed to a superhuman agency, yet it is wholly consonant with our knowledge and mastery of the sources of wealth, and our ideal of the relations of the individual and the State, for the individuals of a nation to ask the nation as an organised unit of economic activities to give them their bread for the coming day.

7. Another most interesting confirmation of religious humanism is found in the interpretation which the new scholarship gives to Christ's teaching concerning the forgiveness of sins, and therefore to the clause "And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone

that is indebted to us." Professor Nathaniel Schmidt, in his article on "The Son of Man" in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, basing his argument upon philological grounds, has called the attention of the world to the fact that Jesus Christ taught that it is in the power of man to forgive sins. Schmidt maintains that when Christ used the words "Son of Man," he meant simply man, and did not refer to himself as a unique personage with peculiar power to absolve from transgression and its effects. Just as Christ maintained that the sabbath was made for man, so he taught that man had power to forgive sins. How wholly in harmony is this interpretation with the idea for which I have been contending—that the Lord's Prayer is addressed to the good-will of the community as a whole, and that the good-will among men throughout the nation is supplicated to forgive the transgressions of the penitent, whose penitence, of course, can then consist in nothing more than the desire to become identified in purpose and service with the universal will of humanity.

Probably there is no more terrible and tragic idea in the whole annals of religious supernaturalism than the notion that, when a man has transgressed the moral law, it is not sufficient that he shall be forgiven by himself, by others and by the community as a whole, but must also receive pardon from a superhuman agent. It was this, according to Professor Schmidt, which Jesus controverted in teaching that forgiveness and refusal to forgive were practices and dispositions only of man with man, and that the test of their righteousness was their benefit to man.

When we think of the Lord's Prayer as especially addressed to the good-will which inheres in the community as a whole and is organised in the State, we see the perfect tenderness and moral delicacy, as well as the logic, of the prayer: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that

trespass against us." This petition presupposes that it is to be uttered only by persons who themselves have forgiven all their enemies ; for only on the basis of their own clear conscience as regards this duty and of their devotion to the good-will of the whole, do they ask that they shall be accepted by the community despite their own past transgressions.

It must not be forgotten that in attempting to identify the power to whom the Lord's Prayer is addressed with the unifying will of the community, I have always had in mind that though this will had become incarnate in the organised movement founded by Christ and the Apostles, yet it is an ideal rather than a fact. In the religious sphere, forgiveness is not between the individual and the *actual* community ; when in his own conscience a man has forgiven his fellow-mortals, he is inwardly aware that he is in harmony with the animating principle of all society, and he knows that his sins are forgiven ; he is well assured that St Matthew is right in putting into the mouth of Jesus the words, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you : but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses."

The principle that Man can and must forgive those men who have forgiven their enemies, becomes self-evidently true, in the light of the conception of human society embodied in Shelley's immortal lines from the *Prometheus Unbound* :—

Man, one harmonious soul of many a soul,
Whose nature is its own divine control,
Where all things flow to all, as rivers to the sea ;
Familiar acts are beautiful through love ;
Labour, and pain, and grief, in life's green grove
Sport like tame beasts : none knew how gentle they could be !

8. The petition "Lead us not into temptation" must remain a moral puzzle, so long as the prayer is conceived of as addressed to a being, infinite in goodness and power, in whose consciousness there is no admixture of error or wrong-doing. It requires more than the subtlety of sophistic dialectics to make it plausible that an infinite agent, perfect in tenderness and resources, could bring anyone into real temptation. It might be said that temptation is of two kinds—inward, through deficiency of insight and strength on the part of the person tempted; or outward, where the allurements of circumstance is such as practically to annihilate the free choice of any finite will. But to bring a being into either form is irreconcilable with the idea of an all-powerful and at the same time all-good agent. If he were all-powerful, to lead into temptation would prove him less than infinite in goodness; if he were all-good, it would prove him less than infinitely powerful. But the moment the prayer is conceived as addressed to the general will of the community, the clause "Lead us not into temptation," far from being a puzzle, becomes the very key to a puzzle. This unifying will is good; but, as actually manifesting itself, it is not superior to error and its resources are limited. Not only so, but, as we found when considering the power of importunity, it is necessary to challenge the attention of finite minds. We needs must ask those about us to shield us both from our inward proneness and from blinding allurements to transgression.

If, in defence of the old interpretation of the power to whom the Lord's Prayer is addressed, it be said that the infinite Creator leads his children into temptation only to try their characters, we must protest that then he is unworthy of worship. It is sometimes maintained that although the Creator is all-powerful and all-good, his

goodness is not what would be goodness in finite creatures. But if goodness in our God does not mean the same in kind, however raised in degree, as it does when we are judging of human deeds and human character, how can we call it goodness? Has anyone ever been able to refute John Stuart Mill's eloquent protest against such jugglery with the terms of the moral life?

I take my stand [says Mill] on the acknowledged principle of logic and of morality, that when we mean different things we have no right to call them by the same name and to apply to them the same predicates, moral and intellectual. Language has no meaning for the words Just, Merciful, Benevolent, save that in which we predicate them of our fellow-mortals. And unless that is what we intend to express by them we have no business to employ the words. If in affirming them of God we do not mean to affirm those very qualities, differing only as greater in degree, we are neither philosophically nor morally entitled to affirm them at all.

If it be said that the qualities are the same, but that we cannot conceive them as they are when raised to the infinite, I grant that we cannot adequately conceive them in one of their elements, their infinity. But we can conceive them in their other elements, which are the very same in the infinite as in the finite development. Anything carried to the infinite must have all the properties of the same thing as finite, except those which depend on the finiteness. . . . I know that infinite goodness must be goodness, and that what is not consistent with goodness is not consistent with infinite goodness. If in ascribing goodness to God I do not mean what I mean by goodness; if I do not mean the goodness of which I have some knowledge, but an incomprehensible attribute of an incomprehensible substance—what for aught I know may be a totally different quality from that which I love and venerate—what do I mean by calling it goodness, and what reason have I for venerating it? . . . To say that God's goodness may be different in kind from man's goodness, what is it but saying, with a slight change of phraseology, that God may possibly not be good?

Let us, then, stand by our ethical judgment, and assert that a person's finiteness of physical power and mental resources can be his only excuse for bringing another into real temptation, inward or outward. But if the being whom we ask to lead us not into temptation is thus finite and yet may be moved to protect us, a rational basis for our prayer is established.

9. We need spend little time upon the last injunction, "Deliver us from evil." If we compare this rendering with the more authentic one of the Revised Version, "Deliver us from the evil one," our standpoint of social expediency would perhaps lead us to choose the former, lest the phrase "evil one" should be understood to imply an extra-human personality. To unify and personify evil here is no great gain, whereas anything that might tempt the imagination away from the identification of evil with the actual, concrete factors of mental, social and physical life would be a loss.

The general reasons for the supplication "Deliver us from evil" are on a line with the prayers for bread for the coming day, for the forgiveness of sins and for immunity from temptation, and therefore need not be specified.

10. The phrase "For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory" is its own justification as a finish to the Lord's Prayer, and no question as to its origin can touch its claim to be retained. It beautifully lifts the spirit of the suppliants from their personal need, weakness and danger to the benignant power of the will of the community.

I have presumed to point out that the Lord's Prayer is not specifically adapted for the use of little children, of the indifferent, of unregenerate sinners, of the poignantly repentant, or of anyone in spiritual isolation. It pre-

supposes a group of persons banded together for the actualisation of a definite end, and is a social act; it might even more aptly be designated the Church's Prayer than the Lord's. In speaking thus of the Church, I hope I do not obscure my meaning, which is that the Lord's Prayer is a Congregation's prayer; it is suitable for any assembly for the advancement of human welfare. Those who hold, moreover, as I do, that every nation, in so far as it is the standard-bearer of the ideal of human life, is a church, will readily pass to the position that the Church's Prayer is the Nation's Prayer. The true patriot will identify the Father with the higher will of his own country, and the kingdom of heaven with the future of his own land.

Thus our study of the Lord's Prayer from the point of view of social utility has justified its retention as part of a national scheme of moral instruction and edification. In the future it may be used less generally because more discriminatingly, but it will thereby become more efficacious.

CHAPTER V

THE CREEDS AND ARTICLES

I SHALL try to show that the Apostles', the Nicene and the Athanasian Creeds, like the Decalogue and the Lord's Prayer, are capable of being interpreted, without distortion, as expressions of humanistic idealism. When thus viewed, and when compared with analogous documents, they stand forth as three of the profoundest and most expedient utterances ever promulgated; and of the three, the greatest is the Athanasian.

Wholly unwarranted is it on the part of persons who have not devoted special study to religious experience and expression, to cast this document aside, because its distinctions seem to possess no vital import. That to such persons it sounds super-subtle, self-contradictory and pedantic, is no proof that it really is so. The fundamental presuppositions of chemistry or physics, formulated in as brief a compass, would appear to the uninitiated equally empty and vain. And if it be maintained that even to the philosophically initiated the Athanasian Creed not only seems but is full of self-contradictions, it can be answered that this objection applies equally against the fundamental presuppositions of chemistry and physics. It is as easy to expose to view unverified assumptions and inherent inconsistencies of thought in a creed of modern

science as in the creed of the Church ; but if the defects of a formula are not arbitrary, and if the formula be accepted tentatively only, it must not be cast aside until superseded by a better.

If it be argued that creeds—short and precise formulæ of faiths—are altogether a mistake, we must turn to practical and theoretical teachers to decide for us. These, as I have said, sanction a judicious use of compendiums of knowledge. If the Creeds as compendiums must go, so must the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer.

If it be maintained that in other departments of human thought and experience the world has fared very well without doctrinal confessions, it must be answered that religion, if judged by its hold on masses of men, has fared better with a creed than chemistry, physics, political economy and psychology without one. The sciences still wait to become popular ; their method and spirit have not yet permeated the masses of any nation, despite State educational systems in use for a century. Perhaps the sciences must teach their creeds as indefatigably as the Church has taught hers.

Sometimes the rejection of the Athanasian Creed is based not on any dislike of creeds in general but on the fact that it, like the Apostles' and the Nicene, was formulated many centuries ago. The argument is that it must by this time have become obsolete and useless ; we must have outgrown it, as we have outgrown so many other teachings of a pre-scientific age. If it had always been held only tentatively and had been continually subjected to revision, probably no vestige of it—the argument runs—would have survived. Now, to decide whether it in part or as a whole is to be cast to the rubbish-heap, we must compare it carefully with our living experience to-day and with the best formulation of that experience

which we can make. We cannot argue *a priori* that because fixed in the fifth century after Christ, it is outworn. Much beauty, many truths, blossomed to perfection long before the Athanasian Creed was fixed, and yet are as fresh and invigorating to-day as they were in the hour when they first took shape.

Personally, when I read this creed on the supposition that it is treating of natural factors in moral experience, I detect only two errors in the whole of it—its assertion of the Virgin Birth and its assertion of the literal resurrection of Christ's spirit and body after his death. Setting these two points aside, all its distinctions seem to me not only true but of vital import to national welfare.

As to the two errors. First, the creed, in the clause "And man, of the substance of his mother born in the world," denies by implication that Jesus was begotten of a human father. His humanity is traced wholly to his mother. Now of course there is no biological impossibility against the idea that Mary was with child, although not according to the ordinary way. But the notion is monstrous both morally and biologically that such an incident could explain the moral purity and genius of Christ. Evil and finiteness of personality are transmitted from a human mother as much as from a human father. So the moral and biological motive of the doctrine of the Virgin Birth is gone for ever. This clause of the creed should be amended so as to read: "And man, of the substance of his human father and mother born in the world."

This change would entail the necessity of an amendment of the preceding clause, which now reads: "God, of the substance of the Father, begotten before the world." It is perfectly clear that the metaphorical use by Jesus of the word "Father" as an epithet for the Being he

worshipped, led the next age, as metaphors are prone to mislead the uncritical, into a confusion of thought. They forgot that Christ's God was his father only in a metaphorical sense. Christ's God was Wisdom and Goodness as active energies in life ; and his voluntary acceptance of Wisdom and Goodness as the guide of action constituted him also God. The creed is right, then, in saying that Jesus Christ is both God and man. And the clause we are considering might avoid all confusion if it were so amended as to read : "God, of the substance of Wisdom and Goodness."

The creed likewise seems to me to err in asserting that Christ rose with his body after death, and that all men will some day so rise. The clauses read :

Who suffered for our salvation : descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead.

He ascended into heaven, he sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty : from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies : and shall give account for their own works.

Now, there is nothing biologically or metaphysically impossible in the notion that all men will rise with their bodies after death. But it has become morally impossible to retain the notion as a necessary support and inspiration to our faith in righteousness. We no longer need to believe that we shall rise again, either with or without our bodies. We never should have needed it, had our insight into the meaning and bearings of the good life been clear and penetrating. The modern recognition that moral faith does not need the belief in a life after death is one of the greatest achievements which the human spirit has ever made. It is a discovery in the very spirit of the New Testament, that enthusiasm for

holiness is not essentially dependent upon belief in the survival either of the mind or body of anyone after death.

Let us assume, then, that the moral judgment of our day discards the doctrine of the resurrection both of spirit and body, solely because that doctrine is not needed in a scheme of human redemption. Such a reason for discarding it is more than sufficient. Who retains in any practical scheme elements that are known to be superfluous? Only one who is ready to sacrifice the efficiency of the scheme to adventitious issues.

Granting, then, that the doctrine of the resurrection both of spirit and body is to be omitted, we may, as revisers and re-interpreters, proceed in two different ways concerning these resurrection clauses of the creed.

First, we may delete them and substitute a statement of the mental and social factors and incidents which in the New Testament and in the creed are bound up with the notion of bodily resurrection. The belief that upon his death Christ descended into hell and rose on the third day grew undoubtedly out of the fact that for the first two days after his death the hearts of his disciples sank in despair; for two days the light of Christ's life was extinguished for them. But on the third day they began to take heart once more, and thus the spirit and work of Christ died and rose again. The insight and enthusiasm which once had lived in him alone and then was apparently extinguished, now burst into a quickening and enduring flame in the minds of the disciples. They, accordingly, with joyous gratitude, exalted him on high; they enthroned him in their souls at the right hand of the Law of Righteousness. He became to them vitally one with the Moral Law itself. With it, he would be for ever coming to judge the morally quick and the morally dead.

These historical factors and incidents, mental and social, were so potent, and their effects have been so wide and deep in human society, that they are worth preserving in a compendium of moral faith. But it is possible to preserve them, while omitting all reference to the resurrection of spirit or body after death.

There is, however, as I have said, a second way open to us. The resurrection clauses might be retained, but frankly as containing a myth. There is no harm in teaching a myth as such. On the contrary, there may be a great gain, when the myth is one which, like the belief in the resurrection of Christ's body, has quite spontaneously and sincerely evolved out of some deep and passionate experience. To retain the resurrection clauses and interpret them literally would be to encumber our educational scheme with embarrassing superfluities. But to retain them, while interpreting them as a naïve blend of materialistic fancy and moral fact, would be a safeguard in the future against a similar mistaking of fancy for fact. Also, in preserving a record of the doctrine of the resurrection long after it had been outgrown, there would be the advantage of being reminded by what road the human mind had climbed.

Now to the other points of the creed. The first that strikes our attention is the seemingly terrible assertion that except everyone do keep whole and undefiled the faith therein expressed, he shall without doubt perish everlastingly. With this assertion the creed opens, and the same thought is uttered in its closing words. It begins—

Whosoever will be saved: before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholick Faith.

Which Faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled: without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.

The closing words of the creed are—

This is the Catholick Faith : which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.

Does this declaration that salvation depends upon orthodoxy of belief consist of sober truth, and therefore of humane advice, or is it but a bringing down upon the ignorant laity of the cloven hoof of priestly authority and ascendancy ?

To settle this point, we must first bear in mind what the social and human aspect of “perishing everlastingly” is. “Perishing” can mean nothing else than being shut out from the life of the Church, and “everlastingly” can only mean permanently ; “being saved,” on the other hand, must mean sharing the blessings of the Church’s life. The clause, then, is not so terrible after all : “Which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall be permanently excluded from the privileges of Church membership.” What seemed so terribly unjust in the clause was due to the supernaturalistic interpretation of it. Undoubtedly the notion was morally monstrous that the Creator had dictated this faith and would miraculously cause anyone who did not keep it whole to be tortured for ever and ever after death.

But having thus reduced the clause to its social reference, we must, in order to estimate it soberly, consider whether, besides churches, all other organisations which stand for ideas exact subscription to their teachings or not ; and, if they do so, whether such a policy of condemning heretics by excluding them is expedient and just or not. If we should find that the practice is universal and unavoidable in all other social bodies for the propagation of an idea, we must then ask : Shall the

Church be an exception to the general rule? And, if so, to what extent, and why?

From a survey of other organisations, we find that they are all equally jealous with the Church not only for their ideas, but for such a formulation of them as will prevent them from being misrepresented or distorted. In politics, every party exacts rigid adherence to its principles and programme, and in order to define these it is as ready as the Church to resort to subtleties. Note the jealous rallying—out of what had seemed a twenty years' death—of the Liberal party to the principle of Free Trade before the General Election of 1906. There never was a better illustration of the fact that the life of an organisation depends upon loyalty to an idea. Note, still further, the subtleties of Mr Chamberlain and Mr Balfour in order to point out the peculiar shade of the new doctrine of Protection as distinguished from the old. To be just to the Church, then, we must never forget that all secular organisations practise, if they do not reiterate in words, the principle of the damnatory clauses of the Athanasian Creed. But the question now arises, are all these secular organisations mistaken in their policy? Could any party admit heretics to active membership? It is self-evident that one which did would cease to exist. How could Free Traders allow Protectionists into the organised movement for Free Trade? How could vegetarians admit persons who advocated flesh-eating? How could anti-vaccinationists allow champions of vaccination to use their meetings and appropriate money given to oppose vaccination, for the defence of it? Such a course would be suicidal. And it is evident that if a question were to arise as to what, for instance, vegetarianism is, the vegetarian party, if it did not wish to become atrophied, would be compelled to define exactly what it meant. No

subtlety could be called empty or pedantic which was necessary to meet difficulties as they arose. The principle, then, that whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the faith, is practised by every intelligent organisation ; and the negative side of the principle is that he who does not keep the faith whole and undefiled shall be extruded as a heretic.

The question, then, confronts us, Shall the Church be an exception in its policy ? If not, it will be justified in retaining its damnatory clauses ; if, however, the Church wishes to be an exception, it must delete these clauses. It is evident that a church which does not pretend to be identical with a nation and is not established as a State institution, and yet stands for definite ideas, is perfectly consistent in driving out heretics, and must do so unless it purposes suicide ; for any society which discards one idea and adopts its very opposite has lost its personal identity and ceased to be. It must be remembered, however, that it is perfectly consistent with loyalty to the fundamental principle of an institution that it should go on evolving by rendering explicit what before was implicit and possibly unconscious ; but no new point added to a creed shall contradict the points already accepted. Unhappily, as a historical fact, dissenting bodies in England have forbidden both re-interpretation and the addition of supplementary revelations, as well as doctrines which would violate the vital principle of their organisation ; and this has induced stagnation in them. But the mere exclusion of heretics does not necessarily involve an arrest of development. This is seen to be possible, however paradoxical the statement at first seems, if we remember that a creed is a formula which is supposed to contain no truths that are not thought by its supporters to be necessary to salvation. Should the

majority of the members of any nonconformist church cease to hold to the articles of their creed, it would, of course, be possible for them to adopt others, although many theoretical and practical problems would arise. If their property was owned by them on condition of teaching a set formula, they might be morally obliged to forfeit it, or gain legal permission to continue in possession of it. A theoretical question which would arise would be whether a church which changes its principle but not the *personnel* of its membership is the same church or not. My own judgment is that continuity of membership does not constitute identity. A Unitarian church which adopted the Athanasian Creed would surely cease to be a Unitarian church, although it lost no member through the change.

If in a nonconformist body the question is not one of a change of formula but of interpretation of the formula, the question arises, Can it adopt a new and opposite interpretation and still retain its personal identity? Do churches allow re-interpretations? and, if they do, is it a wise policy? To these questions the answer surely must be in the affirmative. New insight into an old formula may cause a rejection of the earlier interpretation; but if the new insight reveals a deeper meaning, a more vital truth and a finer appositeness in the formula itself, the new revelation must be accompanied with a sense that not the old formula was at fault but the theoretical explanation of it which had been adopted. Evolution, then, within even a nonconformist body is possible by way of re-interpretation; and a man is not a heretic who finds his insight best expressed in words by the creed of a church, even if his insight differs from that of the majority of the members. The question of heresy becomes one of practical politics only when the old formula becomes inadequate, as it very often does, for the new philosophy.

But as my first concern is not with non-national and non-established churches, let us consider what is a far more complicated problem : whether a national State Church can possibly remain or become truly national, and yet maintain that the keeping of its formulated teaching whole and undefiled is necessary to membership in it.

Sir John Seeley, viewing the Church as the nation in its idealistic trend, took the position that the Church does not stand for an idea or a theory or doctrine ; it is not, he said, a philosophical school ; it stands for a life—the higher social life of the whole nation. Intellectually it is indifferent, or should be, to doctrine. No assent to theoretical statements should be exacted either from clergy or laity.

A similar position is advocated by the Modernists who are not cut off from the Roman Catholic Church. The laity, they say, are the real Church ; the rules of life actually practised by Christ and his true imitators, and the continuity of this life, constitute the Church. If such be the case, membership is compatible with an entire discarding of all the teachings ever promulgated by the Church authorities.

I confess that this attitude of Seeley and some of the Modernists seems to me impossible, and if adopted it would prove fatal to the Church. The error at the basis of it is the supposition that theory, intellect, philosophy, is not an essential part of the moral life. The implication is that it makes no difference what a man's philosophy is ; but if, as I hold, theories, ideas, doctrines, in great part determine conduct—if it be true that without them what a man does can scarcely be said to rise to the level of human responsibility, and therefore of morality—the Church cannot afford to surrender dogma. She may

need to re-interpret it and revise it or reject it, but always for another formula ; but to do without any dogma is for her to commit intellectual suicide.

From this point of view it becomes evident that a national State Church is confronted with a great dilemma. She must stand for ideas, but how can she do so if she pursues the policy of welcoming each and every phase of opinion which exists in the nation ? Briefly to give the solution of this dilemma, in order not further to digress from the theme which has suggested it, I would say that the Church's first duty is to the doctrine which she holds in trust, and the difficulty only arises when she asks how she can best in the end bring about universal loyalty to that doctrine. Such universal loyalty does not mean mere outward assent, but insight, and a free, rational acceptance of her teaching. That kind of holding of the faith which saves cannot be brought about by threats or punishments or fears. Indeed, the history of religion shows that perfect freedom of discussion and intimate spiritual contact among those who hold different dogmas, and prolonged controversy and conference with the object of solving differences, is the only possible way of arriving at unity of faith. The Church, then, for the sake of unity and harmony, must herself encourage variety and intellectual strife. The encouragement of difference of faith is the only means of putting an end to difference of faith. Superficially, then, the Church of England would be inconsistent with herself if she were to recognise all the different sects and welcome each, even including Jews, Unitarians, and naturalists, and yet at the same time retain the Athanasian Creed as an optional formula to be used at the discretion of any congregation. But fundamentally such a course, if it were adopted only as a means towards the end of an ultimate universal acceptance of the Athan-

asian Creed, would be wholly self-consistent. Her catholicity and tolerance would then be not like that of the Roman Empire, which in order to bring about immediate peace recognised the gods and the doctrines of every newly conquered race, nor would it have anything in common with the policy of that Modernism which seems to deny any importance to dogma. The Church would, on the contrary, be assuming the position of a wise teacher, let us say, of the doctrine of evolution, who would not only allow, but stimulate to the utmost, the critical judgment of his pupils, prompted thereto by his absolute confidence in the irrefutability of the theory and the final acceptance of it by everyone who was bold enough and capable enough to grapple with the problem. All teachers of science encourage independent thought, and greet with respect every new objection which seems to assail the tenets or the method of science. Likewise, every religious prophet who has had real insight, feeling that he was face to face with universal realities of moral experience, and that he attained this direct perception only by challenging every claimant to truth, has attempted to create the same inquiring spirit in others. But at the same time he has announced his own revelation and declared it to be necessary to salvation, which is equivalent to asserting that he who does not attain it perishes.

The next two sentences of the creed, which recall to mind by contrast the Apostles' and the Nicene, read :—

And the Catholick Faith is this : That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity ;

Neither confounding the Persons : nor dividing the Substance.

For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son : and another of the Holy Ghost.

It seems not to have occurred to many who believe in the Trinity, but yet prefer the Apostles' or the Nicene Creed, that neither of these affirms this doctrine. Neither of them declares that Father, Son and Holy Ghost are three in one. Each points out the three, but does not assert the unity. It is true that the Nicene Creed declares that the Father is God and the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is Lord of life ; but to say that all three are God is not to say that they are one. It might only indicate that "God" was a general term, like the word "man," and subsumed three persons just as the word "man" subsumes many. The Apostles' Creed does not even imply that the Holy Ghost is Lord nor that Jesus Christ is God. In fact, not only is the unity of the three unstated, but the equality of the three is in no wise hinted at. On the contrary, one cannot read the Apostles' Creed impartially and not feel that it implies the subordination both of Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost to God the Father. Likewise, despite the epithet "Lord" applied to the Holy Ghost, and "very God of very God" to Jesus Christ, the Nicene Creed gives the impression that both the second and third Persons of the Trinity are subordinate to the first. The second is "begotten" by the first, and the third "proceedeth" from the other two. It is quite evident that, unless some statement were expressly made to prevent the inference, an impartial mind would conclude inferiority and subordination, and therefore not a Trinity of equals.

If, then, the Church's faith is the doctrine of the Trinity, the Athanasian Creed must supersede the other two. If the doctrine of the Trinity not only is but ought to be the teaching of the Church—as I hope, in the light of naturalism and democratic idealism, to show—the Athanasian Creed must morally as well as logically

become the Church's weapon against heresy. I am not implying that the Athanasian Creed should not be subjected to revision, for I think it should; but it would still be the Athanasian Creed, if the modifications were not untrue to the spirit of the original document, and if they only consisted in removals of adventitious defects.

Before taking up the remaining sentences of the creed, let us turn to consider whether experience leads us, quite independently of the Church's teaching, to a recognition of three factors which it is morally of prime importance for us to keep in mind, and yet each one of which is equal with the others, and all are substantially one. Suppose that we should find, further, that, of these three factors, the second came from the first and the third from the other two; and that, in order to have a far-sighted policy for the redemption of the world, we found it was essential not to count any one of these factors morally less significant than the others, but to regard all three with equal deference and attention. And suppose that such was the nature ascribed to God by the Athanasian Creed. Would not this fact constrain us to believe that the men who formulated it had experienced and discriminated the same three moral factors as we had? But even if they had not, but had meant something else, should we not appropriate their statement, provided it was the best possible delineation of our own discovery, and provided we took due care to leave no doubt in anyone's mind as to our own meaning?

Now, I believe that experience, under careful and wise discrimination, does lead to the recognition of three supreme factors in every moral and social polity, and that all judicious statesmen must recognise their co-equality and unity. I believe, further, that many a well-meant

movement and many an unselfish life have been shipwrecked because one of these three factors was exclusively attended to or given precedence over the others. Salvation depends upon the equal recognition of all three ; and the work of that man fails everlastingly of achievement who does not keep the faith in all three whole and undefiled.

But as I cannot lay claim to any such knowledge of universal experience as would enable me to place this belief of mine upon a truly objective and scientific basis, I must fall back upon something like personal and individual experience and testimony, and must be content with simply turning the attention of my readers in the direction in which my own has been drawn, in the hope that they will for themselves look to their own experience and see, if they have never noticed before, whether there be not in it three such factors as are represented in the Athanasian Creed. I say that this method of mine is not objectively scientific. Yet in the present state of science such a peculiarity cannot be accounted a defect. In psychology, especially in the domain of the ethical life, we have not passed beyond the stage where each man must report his own experience and present his own classification, asking that others shall judge his testimony by the light of their own direct observation. Gradually in this way an objective and universal witness will be furnished.

My own evolution in religious thought has been from belief in Principles only as the guide of life to an equal belief in Persons, also, who best embody the principles ; and thence to a co-equal belief in Parties made up of the persons devoted to the principles. I became convinced that the man who follows only principles as he sees them, but keeps aloof from identifying himself in discipleship

and fellowship with persons and parties, is in great danger of mental eccentricity, narrowness, blindness and self-deification. A man cannot save his soul simply by devotion to abstract ideas. Not only he suffers, however, but the world loses a great part of the benefit it might receive from him, were he to show equal devotion to the persons and the parties who embody the ideas. To me, a denial of the need of holy friendship and organised co-operation soon seemed to be the besetting sin of the higher type of character. It was a sin of an intellectual order. The man who held aloof from persons and stayed outside the party devoted to his truth, I saw to be a heretic, and I realised that this heresy was such that, if it spread, the world could never be saved.

As I have advanced in years I have further come to realise that even in youth I was not simply following ideas, and was not inspired merely by the inner law of my own reason, although I then imagined that it was so. Time has revealed to me that my debt in youth to the persons who taught me principles was as great as that to the principles themselves. How could it be otherwise? I now even see that those very principles which I still hold and worship were themselves emanations as well as visions of the peculiar characters and temperaments of the persons who were my moral and intellectual guardians and guides. I also with the years saw clearly that, although there was no party that these teachers and I belonged to, nevertheless there was an organised social group which, over and above its isolated members, stood for the principles I readily and thankfully accepted as true. Many a family, where the parents agree in principle and thought, is in reality a religious party; there are conferences and discussions, there is co-operation and propaganda, there is a mission work done which no

isolated member, nor all severally, could do. And as one looks back upon one's life it becomes a necessity of human piety to regard as co-equal in worth with the principles one learned, the persons and the party from whom and by virtue of which one imbibed them. Devotion to principle induces intellectual integrity and moral self-reliance ; love of one's spiritual guides grows into gratitude, humility and purity ; fidelity to the organised group-life generates enthusiasm, a passion to reform the world, a sense of the greatness of the cause, and a readiness on occasion to sacrifice even one's own life for it.

It is to be noted that there are three distinct ways of understanding the dynamics of history ; and that each is wrong if taken as adequate in itself, but that all are right if seen to refer not to three powers existing separately, but to three in one. Some say that the upward-moving forces in history are, and always have been, ideas ; ideas inspire multitudes to die gladly for them. Others equally contend that only men—great personalities, living, concrete, individual human beings—have been the lifting and guiding power in the upward evolution of nations and of the world. Then there is a third school, which declares that it has ever been some instinctive social mass—the blind cohesive energy of a nation, a church, a state, a city, a tribe—that has initiated and given momentum to human advancement.

Now, it is true that sometimes ideas alone have been the dynamic force, sometimes only a person, and again only a party. But it has been a calamity to the cause of the good, wherever ideas have dominated at the expense of person or group, or either the person or the group has dominated at the expense of the ideas. The true philosophy of history recognises alike groups, persons and ideas. It further sees that a person is great because

of the idea that dominates him. As a personality he is a divine power because he embodies the idea. A man may have lived for thirty years and not been a Person, in the sense which the word has in history—not a great man ; and then—apparently all of a sudden—he may become the living embodiment of an idea and, being lifted up by it, draw all men unto him. Likewise, there never was an organised movement with power to attract fresh adherents gladly into its service, but it proceeded from persons and principles—from each directly.

Let us now consider the remaining clauses of the Athanasian Creed. It is declared that—

There is one Person of the Father, another of the Son :
and another of the Holy Ghost.

Whatever be the special import of the word "Person" here, the clause reminds us that there is one reality to a principle, another to a human being who believes in it and lives it out, and still a third to a party organised to exemplify and teach it. We also know—for it is witnessed in the New Testament—that the reality which Jesus called his Father, and with which he identified himself, was something invisible and impalpable to sense ; that his disciples soon began to call him the Son of that reality ; and that they named the animating will of the Church the Holy Ghost. There can be no doubt, therefore, that this clause sums up the consciousness and the experience of the early Christians. Being true to a principle is being true to a reality different in kind from a human being who embodies it ; and, again, being faithful to a party is psychically different from being faithful to a principle or person. We must not confound these realities.

In the next clause, however, it is declared that—

The Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one : the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal.

Exactly so in one's experience of Principle, Person and Party—their substance is one, and the value of Person is equal to that of Principle ; and in religious experience the majesty of the Church is equally enduring with the dignity of its doctrine and the personal worth of each of its members. Therefore one may continue—

Such as the Father is, such is the Son : and such is the Holy Ghost.

Nor can anyone take umbrage at the characterisation—

The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate : and the Holy Ghost uncreate.

Principles, if anything be so, are uncreated, as they constitute the norm or standard regulating all moral constructions, all judgments. Likewise, since human beings become persons not by compulsion of any outside energy or act, but by intuition and free acceptance of the moral law, persons may very aptly be characterised—being autonomous—as self-created, which is the same as uncreate. Equally fitting is the epithet “uncreate” to an organised social movement or group. Every society of an ethical nature has a unique element in it, as contrasted with abstract ideas and with individual persons, which cannot be resolved into the one or the other.

The next six paragraphs are splendidly exact as assertions of the limitations of our knowledge concerning the three

supreme factors of moral experience, and as characterisations of the most significant features which we can discover in them :—

The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible : and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible.

The Father eternal, the Son eternal : and the Holy Ghost eternal.

And yet they are not three eternals : but one eternal.

As also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated : but one uncreated, and one incomprehensible.

So likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty : and the Holy Ghost Almighty.

And yet they are not three Almighties : but one Almighty.

Probably most readers will confess with me that we do not comprehend the full bearings and nature of moral Principle, Person and Party. Yet if we comprehended one we should comprehend the three ; so they are not three incomprehensibles, but one. The Athanasian Creed exhibits the only kind of agnosticism which the scientific spirit justifies. We know the three ethical realities, but not in full ; nor do we comprehend their organic interdependence.

The creed then declares that—

The Father is God, the Son is God : and the Holy Ghost is God.

And yet they are not three Gods : but one God.

If the word “God” must designate that to which we should steadfastly and devoutly attend in order to receive life’s highest blessings, and if by the Persons of the Trinity be meant the radical factors in moral experience, then these two clauses say that equally to be worshipped are the Moral Law, the individual beings and the social groups that embody it.

In the same way, the next two clauses assert the supremacy or lordship of the three factors :—

So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord : and the Holy Ghost Lord.

And yet not three Lords : but one Lord.

Then the whole is summed up, without adding any new distinction, in the words :—

For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity : to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord ;

So we are forbidden by the Catholick Religion : to say, There be three Gods, or three Lords.

Now a new distinction is presented :—

The Father is made of none : neither created, nor begotten.

The Son is of the Father alone : not made, nor created, but begotten.

The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son : neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.

We often see the coming of a new party into existence, and it always proceeds from persons and ideas. So, too, we often see a human being awakening into personality ; and the awakening always consists in the direct, unmediated intuition of a principle. And the principle itself—it is not dependent for its origin upon any person's authority or any church's dictation. The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten ; rational character is of the Father alone, while communion is of Father and Son. But each remains unique. Hence the creed says :—

So there is one Father, not three Fathers ; one Son, not three Sons ; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts.

And when the disciple is most fully alive to his indebtedness to all three, he will be jealous of any precedence in reverence and dignity shown to any one of the three ; and he will find this sentiment well expressed in the following clauses :—

And in this Trinity none is afore, or after other : none is greater, or less than another ;

But the whole three Persons are co-eternal together : and co-equal.

So that in all things, as is aforesaid : the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped.

He therefore that will be saved : must thus think of the Trinity.

Before proceeding to the second part of the Athanasian Creed, let me say that I do not for a moment think that its authors had consciously in mind what I have been saying about moral factors, and about principle, person and party. On the contrary, I am sure that they did not have in their thought these distinctions and their practical bearings. Had they had them, they would undoubtedly have expressed them, for there is no evidence in the Athanasian Creed that those who wrote and sanctioned it were keeping back anything they counted of worth on the fundamental matters which they loved and held to be vital to the Church's mission. But what I do maintain—because I cannot escape believing it—is that these distinctions which I have specified were actually causing the discriminations they were making. In an earlier chapter I have indicated how it is possible for a man to be animated by a principle, and to illustrate it and be an instance of it to the onlooker, and yet himself not be aware that he is a living embodiment of it. In the religious life, accordingly, those who are disciplined in psychology and in the critical study of social phenomena

can discover what elements in a man's statements are, on the one hand, poetry or abstract theory, and what, on the other, are verifiable fact. And they may draw out the elements of fact and boldly assert that these constitute the essential meaning and the truth of the man's message. There used to be a time when students of history interpreted as a mere priestly falsehood or popular myth the statement that St Francis of Assisi had suffered the stigmata of Christ ; but to-day the fact is accepted. It is, however, accounted no supernatural event, but only an instance of the power which a concrete idea in the mind of a devotee can have through his imagination upon his body. But to this subject, which I have already treated, I here turn only for a moment, in order to indicate exactly in what sense I believe that the Athanasian statement of the Trinity is related to the three supreme factors in moral experience.

In view of the triune reality of the moral life, it is impossible to believe that the creed is here dealing with mere transcendent metaphysical entities, although it may well be conceded that its distinctions, being so radical and so universally valid, must colour any theory as to the relation of thought to being.

The second half of the Athanasian Creed contains those two points which I have already specified as betraying, in my judgment, a lack of discrimination. For these defects I blame—if blame there always must be—not the authors of the creed but the human mind itself, or rather the slowness of human destiny in bringing us those experiences by reacting against which we gain wisdom. This part of the creed begins :—

Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation :
that he also believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord
Jesus Christ.

For the right Faith is, that we believe and confess :
that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and
Man ;

God, of the Substance of the Father, begotten before
the worlds : and Man, of the Substance of his Mother,
born in the world ;

Perfect God, and perfect Man : of a reasonable soul
and human flesh subsisting ;

Equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead : and
inferior to the Father, as touching his Manhood.

Who although he be God and Man : yet he is not two,
but one Christ ;

One ; not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh :
but by taking of the Manhood into God ;

One altogether ; not by confusion of Substance : but
by unity of Person.

There is not here space, else for love of the subject I
would ring out all the changes of my interpretation upon
each of these clauses. I hope, however, that more than
one reader will attempt to do so for himself.

In the clauses I have just cited there appears the word
"Christ," which now the creed takes up and with perfect
sureness of touch characterises, in its distinct bearing :—

For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man : so
God and Man is one Christ ;

Who suffered for our salvation. . . .

The Principle and the Person, neither separable from
the other, constitutes the Christ who by suffering redeems
others ;—and the rest I have already interpreted.

To me the significance of the statements in this creed
is not that they outline factors in the experience of one
group of persons called the Church, and in the life of the
Founder of the Church ; their significance is that they
indicate relationships, tendencies and factors universal
in the experience of man, and that they help us to

understand our own moral situation, resources and opportunities for advancing the same ultimate cause as that of the Church, whether we pursue it within or outside of the Church, in the name of religion or merely of politics, social reform, art or science. And concerning the second and third Persons of the Trinity the first part of the Athanasian Creed is already universal in its affirmations.

Undoubtedly those who formulated them were well aware that in the minds of all there would be an understood reference and limitation to Jesus as the second Person, and to the animating spirit of the historic Church as the third ; and such reference is justifiable. However much we may rationalise and universalise the truths illustrated in the experience and character of Jesus and of the organisation which grew out of his life, we can never entirely dis sever our knowledge of universal ethical principles from the lives and the institutions which first stimulated to the consciousness of them. But the jealous limitation of spiritual indebtedness to Jesus and the Church is unfounded and inexpedient. We should proceed, therefore, to extend the reference of the creed by saying that every person who is good, or even every person in so far as he is good, is an instance and illustration of the second Person of the Trinity. In so doing, we should be simply assuming that Christ is not unique in kind, when compared with other moral personalities. When we, however, thus universalise the doctrine as to the second Person of the Trinity and apply it generally, we do not deny the pre-eminence of Jesus or his historic precedence or the human debt to him. But we do rid the Athanasian Creed of its seeming arbitrariness, and we strip it of any seeming offence to the method and spirit of science.

The Apostles' Creed introduces many conceptions not to be found in that called after Athanasius. The first of these is especially significant. The creed opens with a declaration that God is the Maker of heaven and earth. How can it be possible, it may be said, in the face of this declaration, for anyone to assert, as I do, that Christians meant, although unconsciously, by the word "God," not the Creator of the universe but the Good in the world? For how could it be said that the Good in the world is the Maker of heaven and earth, or stands to the cosmos in any relation analogous to that of a Creator?

The notion of the moral ideal with all that favours it may seem at the first glance to have no philosophic significance whatever; it cannot lead to theism or pantheism; it does not seem to throw any light upon the question as to the ultimate reality of things. At most it may be seen to be psychologically of value, and in religion of practical significance.

But as to its metaphysical importance, let me answer first that the expression "Maker of heaven and earth" is itself, from a philosophic point of view, extremely crude. It is poetry, and may help towards an imaginative picture of the origin of things; but it is not a conception which makes comprehensible the problem of existence in a general scheme of thought. In the second place, I would call attention to the fact that the greatest philosophers—Plato and Kant—have held that righteousness, the good will, goodness, and a theory of goodness, are the sole possible basis of a sound metaphysic. Plato and Kant maintained that you can never settle the problems of the relation of thought to being, unless you have a scale of values, and such a scale only the moral judgment furnishes. They say that even the problem of existence can only be solved by understanding the meaning of

existence ; and the meaning of existence must be its significance in relation to ultimate human ends. Plato's doctrine of the Good as the ultimate idea is consonant philosophically with the religious conception that the Good is God. Kant's notion that the moral law is the one element of eternity manifest in time is due to his recognition of the Good Will as a key to Reality.

The new school of philosophy which calls itself Pragmatic or Humanistic likewise teaches a doctrine philosophically favourable to the recognition of the Good as God. In other words, goodness is somehow the root of Reality. For Reality itself is becoming more and more resolved into that which is supremely satisfying to the heart and will, as well as to the rational craving for a principle that shall contain no contradiction in itself and that shall cover all the facts and all the interests of life. I would maintain that goodness is not only the supremely valuable thing, and the thing which ought to be worshipped, but that it is the supremely real thing. Nor is it quite absurd philosophically to declare that goodness—if we take it to mean the deepest law of the human will—is the “Maker of heaven and earth.” If heaven and earth mean the universe, and if, as the idealists say, the universe does not exist except as it is perceived ; and if, further, the forms and categories which are the framework of the perceived universe are given to it by the mind itself ; and if the human mind be essentially ethical will ; then, is it folly to say that Goodness is the Maker of heaven and earth ? Without goodness our rationality, or any being's rationality, ceases ; and when rationality ceases, there is no universe—unless the idealists be altogether wrong.

The doctrine that goodness is God is not pantheism, and it may not be theism as ordinarily conceived ; but

there is a word familiar to all philosophers which does designate well the doctrine that our moral ideals are the ultimate reality of the universe. This word is Mysticism. Ethical mysticism is as old as Oriental philosophy, and as fresh and young as the growing discipleship of Ralph Waldo Emerson. According to it, righteousness is the key to the riddle of the universe. The man who wills aright shall also know of the doctrine. He stands face to face, in himself, with the ultimate reality. I cannot see, therefore, why a man who re-interprets the word "God" in the manner I have suggested, should feel that his truth falls short of what is hinted at in the first utterance of the Apostles' Creed. On the contrary, he must feel that the language of the creed falls short of the philosophic truth which he possesses.

The points in the second portion of the Apostles' Creed have almost all been touched upon by me in other connections, so that I need dwell only for a moment upon certain of them. Ethically, it is altogether desirable that the creed should be so modified that the reference to the mother of Jesus as a virgin should be dropped. And the statement that Jesus was "conceived by the Holy Ghost" should be so recast as to make it quite clear that what is meant is that Jesus was an incarnation of goodness and was quickened by the Jewish theocracy.

In the third portion, we notice in the grouping together of the Holy Ghost and the Holy Catholic Church the recognition that the Holy Ghost is the General Will of the Church. There has been much discussion as to what the communion of saints means. The ambiguity in the phrase leaves us the greater liberty to interpret it as we please; and the interpretation consonant with naturalistic humanism is, of course, the spiritual fellowship of all persons who love and serve

their kind. The expression "the forgiveness of sins," like so many others, is not self-illuminating, and therefore it would seem justifiable for each age and each man, finding any experience which these words fit better than any others, to retain them—explaining, of course, the new interpretation given, if there is danger that others might be misled.

What I have said concerning either the Athanasian or the Apostles' Creed seems to cover every point brought out in the Nicene Creed.

Two general questions still claim our attention—one concerning the Church's use, and the other the intellectual limitation, of the Creeds.

Even if the Athanasian formula is admitted to be a valuable embodiment of the profoundest wisdom, it should not—much less should the Apostles' or the Nicene Creed, each being inferior—be repeated at every service every day in the year, as the Apostles' Creed is at present. One good formula for ever reiterated would put the listening world to sleep. If there were a proper teaching to children before their initiation into membership of the Church, there would be no occasion that any one of the Creeds should be repeated more than once or twice a month in church. Then it would always come with freshness and be interesting by contrast. The mental law of variety, according to which frequent contrasts are needed in order to sustain the attention, would suggest to the wise ecclesiastical statesman that no formula of faith should ever be repeated more than once a week. Various formulæ, presenting various aspects of the one manifold and universal truth, could be introduced.

This leads me to the second question which needs attention. It has often been noticed that the Creeds make no mention of purely moral ideals. They give no

indications as to our duties in life : they do not tell what ought to be. They limit themselves to great—or presumably great—events in the history of man and the life of the universe ; or they allude to great principles, which, however, are viewed as abiding facts—for instance, when the creed says, “I believe in the forgiveness of sins.” Here the meaning is not that sins ought to be forgiven, but that, as a fact, under certain conditions they are forgiven. When it is said “I believe in the Holy Ghost,” there is again a pointing to an actual centre of energising and redeeming power. The distinctions made so subtly in the Athanasian Creed assume to indicate differences existing in the nature of things—and so they do, according to my interpretation. But because the creeds evidently are thus consciously limited to what might be called the metaphysics—or even the physics—of ethics, that is no reason why there should not be supplementary formulæ of a more purely ethical nature incorporated into the Church service. Monotonous reiteration in ritual prevents the adequate presentation of different aspects of thought, duty and spiritual discipline ; but a greater variety of statements from day to day would make it possible to present the fullness of life’s meaning.

Let us now turn to the Articles of Religion. Of all the Prayer Book, they constitute the part least in favour. Happily, nobody wants them to remain as they stand, no one counts them too sacred for revision ; but the weight of judgment seems to be that they should be swept away altogether ; or rather that we need not even trouble to remove them, they being a dead letter already.

This attitude seems to me entirely wrong. In the first place, the Articles are not dead. They are as much alive as ever they were, and on account of the prestige of age

they are more powerful than when, in 1562, under Queen Elizabeth, they were first established authoritatively. Indeed, the one great movement in English religious life during the nineteenth century came to its crisis through a clash with them. It was Tract Ninety of John Henry Newman, on the Thirty-Nine Articles, which reawakened English Protestantism out of an apathy like that of death. What did Newman try to do? Being Catholic at heart, he had from the first accepted every Romish doctrine except the supremacy of the Pope and the worship of the Virgin. He longed for Anglican reunion with Rome, and, with a subtlety that seemed to many almost diabolical, he searched these Articles of the faith of the Church of England to find a way through them. He took as a clue the advice given in the famous Preface, which was published in 1628, under Charles I. It declares that "No man hereafter shall either print, or preach, to draw the Article aside any way, but shall submit to it in the plain and full meaning thereof: and shall not put his own sense or comment to be the meaning of the Article, but shall take it in *the literal and grammatical sense*." Said Newman to himself, "I will take these Articles in their literal and grammatical sense, and see whether the words thus taken do really exclude Catholic doctrine." Thus he was able to prove conclusively that the Thirty-Nine Articles were a work of compromise by statesmen who wanted, while preventing England from submitting to Rome, to conciliate the Romanising party. Newman saw that, while the Articles were established by Protestants, their object was to reconcile and harmonise all the conflicting factions in the nation. He discovered the many verbal loopholes left to enable Romanists to enter the Anglican organisation without maiming their conscience. When the Protestants of Newman's day realised what his subtlety had discovered,

they rose up against him and hounded him out of the Church of England. The Thirty-Nine Articles proved themselves to be more alive than ever. And to this day it is due to their peculiar verbal qualities that the Church of England is able to retain the main body of the Romanising party. But no mortal has to-day dreamed of hoping that the Thirty-Nine Articles could by any possible literalness be so interpreted as to allow all shades of religious opinion now within the nation to be recognised as coming within their meaning. They were not framed to attract Unitarians, Jews, Agnostics, scientific thinkers and social democrats, as well as Romanists and Calvinists.

In fact, the only way now to appreciate the Thirty-Nine Articles aright is to read them with reference to their historic purpose and achievement; and to this I shall confine myself, without attempting a criticism of their contents. We must see what function they performed in the evolution of the nation's life during that period which was foreseen by the statesmen who published them. That national function was and is their real essence. Accordingly, to take the exact statements of the separate clauses and judge them in relation to our thought and our needs to-day is mechanical and unhistorical.

The question is, what part did they play in the economy of the nation's life? Did they or did they not preserve its idealism and its unity? And furthermore, in the light of what they did perform for the nation, we must ask what sort of a document would in our day meet the corresponding need of our times. When we ask that question, instead of disregarding or hating these Thirty-Nine Articles, we shall study them respectfully, in order to learn from them how a similar instrument could now perform a like function.

It seems to me that the more scientific and critical

thinkers of our age have altogether erred in their extreme individualism and in their aloofness not only from the Church, but from the national mission of the Church as the ethical teacher of the people. Modern critical and scientific thought will fail of its fruition, unless it culminates in a crystallised statement of the new view of the universe and of the new moral faith that animates us, and seeks a foothold for this in the formulæ of the Church. The nation needs a document that shall comprehend the very best wisdom of our times, in order that the new idealism, the higher liberty and the deeper insight into human destiny, may be brought to every man, woman and child throughout the land, and the land itself may become a light to all the world.

Now, in the economy of the nation's spiritual life, what was the purpose served by the Thirty-Nine Articles? It was, as I have already hinted, the drawing of the Roman party into the new national idealism. Many minds had been set free to think, and, although Henry VIII. had not intended it, there was a stirring and quickening in the religious consciousness on every side. The movement of Luther had begun to exercise a mighty influence over the imagination of the people, but especially of the scholars, of England. Before Henry died, he arranged that the authorities of the Church should proceed to a restatement and reformulation of ecclesiastical law, and ordered the authorities to do this. In the time of Edward VI., with Cranmer as the prime mover, a Commission was appointed, consisting of eight bishops, eight divines, eight lawyers and eight civilians; and these thirty-two persons met together chiefly under Cranmer to carry out the work. They made forty-two articles. In the time of Mary these were set aside, for during her reign religious differences came to such a heat

as the country has not known since, and more than three hundred executions for heresy took place. Then Elizabeth and her advisers saw the necessity of formulating a statement that would assuage bitternesses and put an end to antagonisms. Accordingly, they took up again the work of Cranmer, accepting the greater part of his formulæ and modifying them slightly, with the express object of bringing about national religious unity. At that time the cleavage was between the Roman Catholics on the one hand and Protestants of the Lutheran and Calvinistic types on the other. The Articles of Faith came as a healing salve, so to speak, to the nation's wounds. The revisers of the Prayer Book drew material from every available source, if only it would serve this purpose. They not only turned to the rites and ceremonies of the historic Catholic Church, but to the new formulæ of Martin Luther. It was in 1517 that he had broken with the Church of Rome. The Emperor Charles V. had requested that there should be a formulation of the principles of the Reformation, and such a statement was submitted to him in 1530. From it the revisers of the English Book of Common Prayer appropriated significant material. They did what they could to reconcile Roman Catholics and at the same time not discourage the new outburst of nationalism. Here, then, were Ridley and Cranmer, Luther and Melancthon, and even Henry VIII. himself, contributing modifications to the historic rites and ceremonies of the Church, in order to draw all men into national unity. On the whole, the Book of Common Prayer as revised accomplished its purpose; the Roman Catholics were in great part conciliated and the Protestant antagonism ceased to threaten civil strife.

In this end which they were meant to serve we see the

real meaning of the Thirty-Nine Articles. That meaning is not without its application to the England of to-day. There is a greater breach in the organic life of the nation as a unit of religion than there was in the time of Henry VIII. or Elizabeth. Although actual strife is not imminent, the nation is suffering a lamentable waste and weakening of her spiritual energy and physical vitality. Who are now the parties to be drawn into co-operative unity? In the answer to that question we shall have stated the problem before the nation to-day.

In order to realise how much the national consciousness has grown and developed since the age of Henry VIII. or Elizabeth, we must remember that these Thirty-Nine Articles were written before Shakespeare and Milton, before Richard Hooker and Jeremy Taylor, before Fox and Wesley. They were written before Francis Bacon had inculcated the method and awakened the spirit of scientific research. They were written before the fundamental discoveries of modern science—before Galileo and Newton—by men who had no conception of law and order throughout the phenomena of the physical universe, much less any idea of the law of uniformity as working in human society throughout its growth. There was not then any recognition of the fact of evolution. Furthermore, they were written in the time of absolute monarchy and autocracy. The House of Commons was still as nothing, and the people were comparatively slaves, both economically and politically; woman was still morally and socially unrecognised as a claimant for just treatment.

As regards philosophy, the Articles were written before the time of Hobbes, Locke and Hume, before Descartes and Leibnitz, before Kant and Fichte. They date from a time prior to the work of all the great thinkers who are

the leaders and formative spirits of modern life. The breach to-day is not between Anglican and Catholic, but between believers in authority and an outside revelation on the one hand, and, on the other, believers in universal experience and inward intuition. Religion *versus* science, the most radical of all conflicts, is the civil feud which the Church must heal. The battle is that of originality against unthinking conformity, of patriotism against vested interests. Yet merely to sweep away these Thirty-Nine Articles would be only to remove an instrument which for a past age performed a work that always needs to be done anew with new instruments. There has, however, been no effort to reformulate the nation's faith. The spirit of reciprocal aloofness among those who differ and the policy of isolating antagonistic sections have dominated for generations, and will, if persisted in, postpone for ever the solution of the religious problem.

The new characteristics of our modern national life have produced conflicting currents of moral sentiment which need harmonisation through judicious formulations of the Church as much as did once questions as to Works of Supererogation, of the Authority of General Councils, of Purgatory, of Communion in both kinds, of the Marriage of Priests, and of the Civil Magistrates. Indeed, much of the space given to these points might now be devoted to living issues, which in all probability will continue to be alive for several centuries.

CHAPTER VI

CONFESSIONS OF HOPE AND DUTY

WHILE the Creeds of the Church do not present ideals of duty, such are to be found in other portions of its ritual, and are conspicuous in the citations from the Bible most frequently reiterated. Presentations of this order, pointing out the chief ends of life, the main outlines of duty and the methods of right discipline for heart and spirit, are of the utmost importance in any scheme of national education and character-building.

But religion has stood at a halt for centuries as regards any new discovery of means of quickening to ethical insight, disciplining the moral judgment and stimulating to hope, to responsibility and to moral faith in the immanent sources of individual and national character. Especially have the laity of all countries been kept untrained in anything like a finer and ampler ethical discrimination and in the psychology and sociology of spiritual culture. The reasons for moral faith and hope have not been presented as they would have been if religion had been brought into harmony with modern views of democracy, and with the recognition of the influence of secondary causes in producing the higher life.

But instead of alluding further to presentations of the

ends and means of religious discipline which, although not analogous to creeds, are needed to supplement them, let me proceed at once to give instances of the kind of confessions I mean.

Take, for example, repentance. A clear statement in psychological language as to its significance and working in the moral progress of the individual would afford untold strength and consolation to puzzled and groping minds ; yet there is no adequate setting forth of its nature in the Church services. But let us suppose that once a month, or at whatever recurring intervals it might seem best, such a confession as the following were read at Morning and Evening Prayer :—

When a man first fully realises what he is and what he ought to be, he falls into self-condemnation, and feels that the whole universe would be justified in rising up against him. Nor would he oppose it. He will not and dare not desire any consolation or release. He is willing to be unconsolated and unreleased ; he does not grieve over his own sufferings, for they are right in his eyes ; he has nothing to say against them.

This is what is meant by true repentance. The man who has entered into this hell—no one else may console him.

But the repentant man is by no means in a state of hopelessness ; his spiritual experience is training him not to desire or regard anything but the Right. And since he now neither cares for nor desires anything but the Right and seeks not himself nor his own things, but only to honour the Right, he begins to do good and to be good, and to partake of all manner of interest in life, and to find peace, rest and consolation in active service for the common weal. He is now in a state of inner freedom, inasmuch as he has lost the fear of pain and the hope of reward, and is living in pure submission to the eternal Right, in fervent love of it, humbly recognising that although he may never attain, he may be ever approaching it. A man so living is henceforth, as it were, in heaven.

Through this hell to this heaven is the only way to life. To find this way and to walk therein is the perfection of religious experience. The following of this path invests each moment with infinite worth ; it makes a man love all the familiar relations of life and find joy in doing the least duties. Such are the nature and fruits of repentance, as revealed in the experience and under the discipline of pure religion.

It is also a pity that the daily service does not incorporate the substance of the two summaries, contained in the Catechism, of duties towards God and towards one's neighbour. It might be wise that, in place of the Apostles' Creed, the minister once a week should read some such modification of them as this :—

It behoves us, when we meet together, to call to mind our duty towards the ideal of righteousness and our duty towards one another.

Our duty towards the moral ideal is to have faith in it, and to love its dictates with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul, and with all our strength. Our duty towards the moral ideal is also to revere it ; to be grateful to all human beings who have taught us to love it ; to turn towards it ; to honour every name which stands for it, and to serve the law of righteousness all the days of our life.

Our duty towards our neighbour is to love him as ourself ; to honour and succour father and mother, sister and brother ; to respect every man, woman and child of every race and nation, however ungifted or unfortunate ; to do to all men as we would they should do unto us ; and to regard as our neighbour every sentient being whom we might relieve from suffering. It is our duty also to obey, under conscience, the regularly established laws and duly chosen authorities of the nation ; but, likewise under conscience, upon occasion to combine with others to change the laws and to remove public officers ; to abolish privileges and customs which do not serve the common weal, and to perform cheerfully all the tasks of citizenship. It is our

further duty, as far as is compatible with self-respect and independence of moral judgment, to heed those who know more and are better than we, and to order ourselves reverently to all to whom we are spiritually indebted. It is our duty to hurt nobody by word or deed ; to be true and just in all our dealings ; to bear no malice nor intolerance in our hearts ; to keep our hands from picking and stealing and our tongues from evil speaking, lying and slandering ; to keep our bodies in temperance, soberness and chastity ; not to covet nor desire other men's goods, but to learn and labour truly to deserve our own living, and to do our own duty in whatever state of life we may be placed.

In similar manner, there would be great gain if the congregation were to be reminded that, however great any man's intellectual progress may be, he still needs many of the old methods of spiritual discipline which a high development of liberty might tempt him to discard. He may have outgrown many old doctrines, but his spiritual nature and necessities have not changed. Especially is a frank confession of faults beneficial to him. Suppose, then, that occasionally this declaration were read :—

Let us not fall into the folly of imagining that, because we may have discarded supernatural and superhuman sources of strength, we have either lost any of our higher aspirations, or outgrown the need of any real means of help and comfort which have aided the good and wise in all ages. The right ways of renewing moral energy and deepening insight which were open to them are at hand for us. And let us also remember that whatever methods of ethical discipline were necessary for them are required by us. Among these, one is especially to be commended : it is that we sincerely confess our manifold wrong-doings, and the evil which is in our hearts, with a view to amending our ways. We should acknowledge the wrong which we have done, or which, against our higher judgment, we are inwardly plotting to do. We should acknowledge it

first to our own conscious self, then to some trustworthy friend who will benignantly take sides against our lower nature ; and then to the persons wronged, or in danger of being wronged, by us.

Such confession tends to remove the self-blindness to which we are prone. It also prevents evil propensities from having time and opportunity to grow in secrecy to monstrous strength. It is neither wise nor prudent that we should hide our sins from the chaste eye of conscience or dissemble them before the world. Rather must we hasten to acknowledge them to ourselves, to spiritual friends, and to others concerned, with a morally obedient heart, to the end that we may overcome them, and that we may deserve forgiveness of the same, both from the inward monitor and from all good men. And although we ought at all times to remember our shortcomings, yet ought we chiefly so to do when we meet together in a fellowship the professed aim of which is to help men to love, know and do the right.

An aspect of the new trend of religious thought and hope would be opened up before the worshippers' vision, if from time to time the priest might declare :—

There have been religions of escape from the human task by ecstatic loss of individual selfhood ; there have also been religions of faith in some power beyond man's spirit and outside of nature's resources, which was to achieve the longed-for end without our exertion. But with us the sense of a task to be done—a task set for us in the constitution of our being—passes quickly into zeal for doing it, into the happy finding of means to the glorious end of a perfected society, the vision of which transfigures by its own splendour the toil and pain through which it is to be realised. And it is the new mastery over nature, and the hope springing therefrom, that transform religion from its old-time attitude of prayer to personal beings other than man into the new attitude of co-operative effort among men. While we are more conscious than men ever were before of individual weakness, we are surprised and thrilled with the upwelling of mighty spiritual power. Mankind is now

entering upon an era of democratic enlightenment and quickening, due to this new gospel of personal responsibility, of civic endeavour, of creative hope and scientific imagination. This religion is crystallising itself into ever clearer consciousness, and will some day transform into harmony with its own nature all the institutions of society. We open our minds to the spirit of this new hope.

Or this :—

Ours is the religion of unfaltering hope and trust for all mankind. The material universe is more and more yielding up her subtlest and most elusive forces into our hands for the healing of disease and for the unifying of the nations into one community, so that all may think together like one mind, and work to the same end in the spirit of love. Likewise, through the application of the methods of science to the facts of mind and of society, the hitherto unexplored depths of man's inner nature are revealing undreamed-of powers of self-development.

Ours thus becomes the religion of creative energy, of salvation, spiritual and material, through personal and civic effort.

There is also reason for reminding congregations that the complexer life of our day brings with it new responsibilities, so that the old commandments and the old rules do not cover the entire field of duty. When this thought ought to be brought home to the people, it might be wise for the preacher to say :—

It is well that we honour father and mother, and that we do not steal, or murder, or commit adultery, or bear false witness, or covet what is another's. It is well that we love righteousness with all our heart, and our neighbours as ourselves. But life continually is calling us to new duties, and our righteousness must, outwardly as well as inwardly, exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees of our day.

We must combat within ourselves the besetting sins of our age, our nation, our own class and condition.

We must deliberately resist the tidal waves of fashion, the panics of the public mind, the bias of class and sect, and every form of social weakness and fear ; we must forbid ourselves all seeking after popularity and all ambition to appear important ; we must set ourselves not to encourage or to create illusions of the religious fancy, or utopian dreams of a social life, but to cultivate sobriety of judgment, sound hopes and firm resolutions for the advancement of mankind. We must wage war upon false optimism, upon the base hope of happiness coming to us ready-made ; upon the notion of salvation by knowledge alone or by material civilisation alone, or by the merit of another alone. We must tear cynicism and pessimism from our hearts. We must teach justification by moral insight and enthusiasm. Our age demands of us moral originality, strenuousness of self-regeneration, a spontaneous ranging of ourselves on the side of right in crises when good and evil are most violently opposed to each other. We are to come not only under the dominion of thought, but of the Vision of the Perfect Life and of the Enthusiasm of Social Service.

In the midst of modern doubt as regards a supernatural world and any cosmic purpose independent of man's, it is most desirable that the people should be reminded that no modern scepticism can touch the foundations of ethical belief ; and the following declaration would serve as such a reminder :—

Our age is marked by doubt, perplexity and hesitation ; it is disconcerted by the apparent baselessness of the forms and institutions upon which society has hitherto seemed to rest. The moral law, the fabric of the State, religion itself, appear to be shaken to their foundations. To many, the only choice seems to be either to close one's eyes to the contradictions of the present and seek refuge in the old habits of faith, or to set forward on a new, untried path of revolution and anarchy.

It is at this stage that recourse is had to Ethics, which opens a new alternative between simple acceptance and

simple rejection of the morality and institutions of the past. Ethics proposes to try to understand them ; it asks whence they came and what they mean ; it blinks no difficulty which the spirit of scepticism suggests, it ignores no claim which tradition puts forward.

But it goes its own way regardless of both, with a deeper doubt than scepticism, because it doubts the conclusions of scepticism, and a deeper faith than traditionalism, because it believes in the reason which traditions embody, and which is the source of what power they still possess.

Again, there is nothing in the regular services to indicate to the people the line of the upward evolution of religion from primitive nature-worship to reverence for the moral ideal. But a short statement like the following would indicate this trend :—

The realisation of the ethical ideal on earth is the goal towards which religion always moves when allowed free development. Wrapt as it may be in ritual and dogma, steeped in superstition, entranced in mysticism, bent on comprehending the infinite, it yet tends inherently to divest itself of all else, and to become purely a system of social redemption by man through natural means. Whatever its starting-point, its destination is to become ethical and scientific. At first, energy is spent in propitiating personal agencies other than man, in seeking salvation for self alone, in preparing for another world, or in adoring the Creator. Gradually these interests become dimmer, while the ethical ideal slowly but steadily rises out of human experience, enveloping and transfiguring man and the universe with its own radiance.

Devotion to the ethical ideal is the final outcome of the religions of the past. It is the beginning and will be the consummation of the religion of the future. We declare that nothing is holier, nothing higher, nothing more sublime, nothing more real than moral goodness in thought, word and deed. We acknowledge human virtue to be the chief factor in life. We accept as permissible that only which does not violate the ethical standard ;

whatever offends against that must be condemned and rejected. While appreciating other spheres of life, such as science, art and happiness, and while striving to take a sane and broad view, we single out for supreme reverence the Moral Ideal, as the regulative principle of life.

It is also important that side by side with the "I believe" of the old Creeds should be presented occasionally a "we believe," wherein not the metaphysic but the concrete vision and ideal goal of moral effort should be indicated. Such a forward-looking gaze characterises this declaration of ethical faith :—

We believe in a Religion and in a Church based on moral science. We believe in the power of united human effort to transform this earth into a world where love, justice, health and happiness shall dwell. We believe that moral fellowship is life, and absence of it death. We believe in a creed of deed, which scorns vain thoughts and empty hours, and rejoices in translating love and wisdom into action. We believe in respecting men, women and children of every race. We believe in reverently studying the whole animate and the whole inanimate world, the past and the present, to the end that through the laws of life and of the universe we may mould the future of mankind into the likeness of the civic ideal. We believe in applying an ethical standard to the family, to one's profession, to social intercourse, to the city and to the State. We believe in granting women equal opportunities with men. We believe in championing the cause of the poor and the oppressed, and in removing every privilege not based on individual ability and not required by the welfare of the community. We believe in arbitration and federation, and we look upon war, even when righteous, as a necessary evil, destined to be abolished. We believe in testing every human interest by these questions: Will it serve the commonwealth? Is it true? Is it beautiful? Is it good?

Nor do the Church services at present give expression to the scientific conception of the universe. The new

knowledge of the uniformity of nature furnishes a basis for new hopes, bolder than ever before, for the sure and quick establishing of a kingdom of righteousness. Why then should not the priest be allowed occasionally to say in church :—

We have come to look upon the Present as the child of the Past and the parent of the Future ; and as we have excluded chance from a place in the universe, so we ignore, even as a possibility, the notion of any interference with the order of nature. Whatever may be men's speculative doctrines, it is quite certain that every intelligent person guides his life and risks his fortune upon the belief that the order of nature is constant, and that the chain of natural causation is never broken.

To bring on the triumph of intellect over mechanism, of responsible morality over irresponsible force, is our mission.

If we think things cannot be different from what they are, we but add so much to the dead inertia of the world, which keeps them as they are ; while if we will not succumb we may form part of the very forces that will help to make things different.

We may win more and more all Might to the side of Right. Thus Morality ceases to be a private affair, and becomes cosmic. Morality may some day mean : the universe under the guidance of our unselfish love.

Here is another statement of ethical faith and ethical prophecy which might prove helpful :—

We believe in finding our reward in doing what is right. We believe that social considerations should determine the limits beyond which natural propensities may not be exercised, and the conditions under which appetites may not be gratified. We believe in progress towards universal health, wealth, intelligence and goodness, and in not clinging to ancient institutions and ideas unless they can justify themselves in advancing the interests of all. We believe in a Democracy healthy, intelligent, temperate, courageous,

and pledged to reform and perfect the State. We believe in thoroughly educating all the young, both for the higher life and for civic efficiency, and in continuing our own mental training throughout our lives. We believe in light, recreation, exercise, cleanliness, fresh air and beautiful surroundings for everybody. We believe in a life of simplicity and of usefulness. We believe in taking up the cause of Righteousness, and purging ourselves and the State of all anti-social influences. We believe in actively resisting injustice; and we would join with all those who believe with us in fighting the good fight.

Perhaps to no other duty has the Church so signally failed to train the people as to intellectual honesty. This deficiency in her instruction might be remedied by some statement like the following, to be said once every month by the priest :—

The most original and one of the most profoundly moral sentiments of our age, is that by virtue of which every act of faith is considered as a serious thing, which should not be lightly undertaken; an engagement more solemn than any other human engagement into which we do not enter without deliberation.

Belief, that sacred faculty which prompts the decisions of our will and knits into harmonious working all the compacted energies of our being, is ours not for ourselves but for humanity. It is rightly used on truths which have been established by long experience and waiting toil, and which have stood in the fierce light of free and fearless questioning. Then it helps to bind men together, and to strengthen and direct their common action. It is desecrated when given to unproved and unquestioned statements for the solace and private pleasure of the believer; to add a tinsel splendour to the plain, straight road of our life, and display a bright mirage beyond it; or even to drown the common sorrows of our kind by a self-deception which allows them not only to cast down but also to degrade us.

Nor ought the Church to lose an opportunity—or fail to make one—for expressing the fine stoic spirit of the following :—

Men say we are born selfish, avaricious and lustful, and cannot be otherwise. We can be! And the first thing is to feel in our heart of hearts that we ought to be—and the iron weight of that obligation will transform us and give us its iron strength. Thou sayest : “But I feel that this appetite is natural to me, and therefore the gratification of it can be no sin.” The inordinate, violent, unruly appetite is no otherwise natural to thee than a leprosy is to a leprous generation. And wilt thou love thy disease because it is natural? It is no otherwise natural than it is to be malicious or revengeful, and to disobey thy governors and abuse thy neighbours; and yet I think they will not judge thee innocent for rebellion or abuse because it is natural to thee. Though the appetite be natural, is not reason to rule thee as natural to thee? And is not the subjection of the appetite to reason natural? If it be not, thou hast lost the nature of man and art metamorphosed into the nature of a beast.

Let it not be in any man’s power to say truly of thee that thou art not simple, or that thou art not good; but let him be a liar whoever shall think anything of this kind about thee; and this is altogether in thy power. For who is he that shall hinder thee from being good and simple? Wipe out thy vain fancies by often saying to thyself: “Now it is in my power to let no badness be in this soul, nor desire, nor any perturbation at all!” Remember this power which thou hast from nature.

The faith born of ethics is that man can do the right. The imperative itself brings the power to meet it. There is no duty if I cannot perform it. And as duty exists and binds and charms me, I know I can do it.

The Church has also in another way inadvertently failed as a moral inspirer and guide. Although she has not intended a shifting of the responsibility for the redemption of the world from the shoulders of living men and women,

such has undoubtedly been an actual result of preaching that the salvation of the world was fully wrought by Jesus Christ and by him alone. It is not true that anyone has been saved by him alone. It would therefore be a gain, now and then, for the priest to say :—

Be assured that if thou failest, none other—not nature, nor man, nor angel, nor Creator—will render the service or bestow the love due from thee. According to thine opportunity thou must be the strength of the weak, the refuge of the sorrowful. Thou must have compassion on those within thy reach who are worn with toil ; thou must defend and cherish the young, bless and support the aged ; welcome strangers who come thy way ; comfort those who are distressed in body or mind ; extend thy mercy to the oppressed, and especially to those who suffer injustice or are persecuted for righteousness' sake. By strength of character thou art to help in saving the vicious. And by the sweet mystery of love it will be thy privilege to soothe into peace the spirit of the dying. All this thou must be and do. Thy deficiencies and imperfections offer no ground for exemption, for they will themselves be overcome and dissolved in the redemptive work that waits for thee.

CHAPTER VII

OPENING SENTENCES AND BENEDICTION

IN gatherings of a non-religious nature, like those of political parties, scientific societies, or shareholders in a company, it is customary for someone to open the proceedings by declaring the object of the meeting. For the same reasons such a custom is equally appropriate in a church service, and has been in vogue in the Church of England since the Reformation. Those present are first reminded of the spirit and supreme purpose of the assembling, lest the careless, distracted and ignorant should lose sight of it and sacrifice it to narrower and pettier aims.

In studying the opening sentences which the Anglican Church has adopted, one is struck by their purely ethical character. This is the more astonishing when one remembers how doctrinal the Church was at the time they were introduced. Here is further evidence that the Church of England is in reality an ethical society; for the keynote of Morning and Evening Prayer struck in these sentences is ethical, not metaphysical.

The first in the sequence of sentences, from which the minister is to choose one or more, is :—

When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.—EZEK. xviii. 27.

And the second :—

I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.—Ps. li. 3.

Then follow :—

Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.—Ps. li. 9.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit : a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.—Ps. li. 17.

Rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God ; for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.—JOEL ii. 13.

To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him : neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in his laws which he set before us.—DAN. ix. 9–10.

O Lord, correct me, but with judgment ; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing.—JER. x. 24, Ps. vi. 1.

Repent ye ; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.—MATT. iii. 2.

I will arise, and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.—LUKE xv. 18–19.

Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord ; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.—Ps. cxliii. 2.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us ; but if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.—1 JOHN i. 8–9.

Upon a humanistic interpretation of the word "God," all of these opening sentences become appropriate in a naturalistic church service, and might therefore remain unchanged. But they are far from adequate. They consist of nothing but a personal confession of moral obliquity and of faith in God, without indicating what factor in human experience the word God covers. There is no expression among them of the sense of personal moral responsibility, of the innate desire to fulfil one's duty, or of the consciousness of the inner power to do what is right. There is no hint of the hope that we human beings can bring about social justice on earth, and obliterate almost all the pain and anguish which detract from the worth of life. There is no indication of the moral solidarity of man, of religion as the idealism of a nation, and of the spiritual joy which floods the heart that has surrendered itself to the service of society. There is also a total omission of the intellectual side of duty. From henceforth the Church must emphasise intellectual honesty, the sinfulness of over-credulity, and the duty of thinking for oneself. When trust is turned from supernatural agents to the power of human forethought and insight, the new direction must be indicated. Religion to-day—both its inspiration and aspiration—is by no means exhausted by a confession of personal sin and personal dependence upon a power outside of the individual's own character. A great part of it is the message to every man that he has within himself far more power to stand erect and act aright than he imagines, and than the religions of the past have declared. Some of the opening sentences of the service ought to reflect these main lines of the idealistic ends, hopes and tendencies of humanity.

One such trend of development has for centuries been,

and will perhaps be for centuries more, a piercing through the symbols of religion to the ideals they signify. In order to express and thereby to strengthen this beneficent tendency, it would be well if the priest were permitted, when he saw fit, to open Morning and Evening Prayer with these words from Emerson :—

Attach thyself not to the Christian symbol, but to the moral sentiment, which carries innumerable Christianities, humanities and divinities in its bosom.

Or these words from Constance Naden :—

He who, losing one ideal, refuses to give his heart and soul to another and a nobler, is like a man who declines to build a house on the rock, because the wind and rain have ruined his house on the sand.

Inherent in the daring spirit which will discard symbol for inner sentiment and dead tradition for living vision is a readiness to stand alone, a loyalty to conviction, which could be communicated to a congregation by these words from Professor Clifford :—

Infidelity does not consist in disbelieving ; it consists in professing to believe what one does not believe.

Or in this perfectly poised utterance of Emerson :—

It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion ; it is easy in solitude to live after one's own ; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.

Other sentences should magnify and glorify Duty as the supreme deity of the human will :—

There is a shrine at which all who love the light rather than the darkness must ever bow. Be they men or gods, they must revere the Moral Ideal. Because of its presence in and among us we have gathered here to-day. Because of its claim upon us we would cast out everything that offends.

A like effect would be produced by these telling words from Dr Martineau :—

The sense of Duty is to our humanity what gravitation is to the physical universe ; and the solid natures in which it masses itself restrain whatever is erratic, and discipline dependent minds to orderly movement.

The same high theme resounds through Wordsworth's lines :—

Possessions vanish and opinions change,
And passions hold a fluctuating seat ;
But by the storms of circumstance unshaken,
And subject neither to eclipse nor wane,
Duty exists.

And again in Emerson's words :—

Every man takes care that his neighbour shall not cheat him. But a day comes when he begins to care that he do not cheat his neighbour. Then all goes well. He has changed his market-cart into a chariot of the sun.

And through these verses (each of which could be used by itself) from Mr Zangwill's poem "Jehovah" :—

I sing the uplift and the upwelling,
I sing the yearning towards the sun,
And the blind sea that lifts white hands of prayer.
I sing the wild battle-cry of warriors
And
The dear word of the hearth and the altar,
Aspiration, Inspiration, Compensation,
God !

Come into the circle of Love and Justice,
Come into the brotherhood of Pity,
Of Holiness and Health !
.

Save thy soul from sandy barrenness,
Let it blossom with roses and gleam with the living waters.

Come, and ye shall know Peace and Joy,
 Let what ye desire of the Universe penetrate you,
 Let Loving-kindness and Mercy pass through you,
 And Truth be the Law of your mouth.
 For so ye are channels of the divine sea,
 Which may not flood the earth but only steal in
 Through rifts in your souls.

The same idea informs the following sentence of
 M. Sabatier :—

The spirit of the old religion placed God outside of the world, sovereignty outside of the people, authority outside of conscience ; the spirit of the new age has the opposite tendency ; it does not deny God nor sovereignty nor authority, but it sees them where they really are.

Strength and peace of soul would come to the hearers, whenever the priest opened the service with these words of Professor Felix Adler :—

The world is to be interpreted in terms of joy, but of a joy that includes all its pain—includes it and transforms it and transcends it. The Light of the World is a light that is saturated with the darkness which it has overcome and transfigured.

The sense of man's divine nature and task would be well conveyed by these noble lines of Coleridge :—

From the soul itself must issue forth
 A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
 Enveloping the earth—
 And from the soul itself must there be sent
 A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,
 Of all sweet sounds the life and element.

The idea that, despite dogmatic differences, all persons who love righteousness are working in organic harmony for the advancement of the cause of the good, should

sometimes be given utterance. This would be done whenever the priest were to say, for instance :—

Let us remember that wherever men and women at this hour are seeking above all else to cultivate purity of heart and strenuousness in well-doing, they and we, whatever our differences, are of one spiritual fellowship.

Or if he said :—

We share the consciousness that has given to all religious teaching whatever value it possesses—the consciousness of the supreme worth of moral goodness. For its sake we would rescue religion from traditions and dogmas which obscure the meaning of righteousness and hide from mankind its claim to their devotion.

The rightful supremacy of moral intuition could again be well asserted in these profound and intimate words from Emerson :—

The decisive incidents of our life are found in some unexpected deed or word of our own or another's, which flashes new light upon our entire manner of life, and says, "Thus hast thou done, but it were better thus"; and all our after-years, like menials, serve and wait on this, and execute its will.

The distinctively social nature of virtue and duty needs to be from time to time brought before the congregation as one of the eternal features of righteousness. Sentences like the following would accomplish this end :—

He who has dedicated his mind to virtue and to the good of human society, whereof he is a member, has begun all that is either profitable or necessary for him to know or to do towards the establishment of his peace.

Sometimes a homely statement, directly reminding the members of the church why they have come together,

creates immediately the right spiritual atmosphere in a religious meeting. This would be the effect were the priest to say :—

The presence of a number of human beings united in devotion to the higher life is an inspiration and unspeakable assurance to each. For it reminds us that the law of righteousness is no mere private concern and no invention of any man's, but has been impressed into our very being from the beginning of human existence by every act of social life, until it has in fact become the inmost nature of us all.

Or—

We have assembled to give voice to our higher hopes and deeper needs, to point out the human wrongs that must be righted, to acknowledge our indebtedness to the good and just from whom we have received benefits, to hear the words of the wise, and to render homage to the ideals of love, truth and beauty.

Or—

Let none who are here present remain mere critics or spectators. Let us all be communicants in the moral life of this meeting, entering into its devotion with a spirit of comradeship, with a becoming sense of our several needs, and with reverence for the ideal of human character.

Or—

We have assembled at this hour because to us the thought of a holy church universal is more than an idle fancy. It is a gleam of what ought to be, a summons to us out of the heart of man, bidding us build the City of the Light.

This hope of a church universal ought never to be left for long unuttered. It would be stimulated, if occasionally the church service should open with such words as these :—

We look for a church universal, into which all the religious communions of the past will merge, and wherein

each will find its meaning and its hope fulfilled. Into this church everyone will be welcomed who acknowledges the bond of brotherly love.

If the sermon to be preached is to bear upon the question of temptation, it would be well that the immortal sentence from Thomas à Kempis, depicting the gradual entrance of sin into the soul, were uttered :—

First there cometh to the mind a bare thought, then a strong imagination of evil, then a delight thereof, and an evil motion, and then consent ; and so by little and little our wicked enemy getteth complete entrance, whilst he is not resisted at the beginning.

It is advisable also that occasionally a confession of moral frailty should be followed closely by a statement of the means of inward strengthening, as is expressed here :—

We are prone to fall into evil ways, and to sin against the light that is in us. But good reason have we to hope, not only for ourselves but for all mankind. For we have found the way of life. We turn direct to the vision of the Perfect, which is our better self, and to fellowship with others in devotion to the good, which is the source of moral strength.

Allied in spirit is the following cry for help, suggested by the well-known passage from Sophocles :—

O that our lot might lead us in the path of holy innocence of thought and deed, the path which august laws ordain ; laws which in our deepest nature had their birth, neither did the race of mortal men beget them, nor shall oblivion ever put them to sleep.

There would be inspiration in the words :—

If we be filled with the love of love, the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn, we shall become a part of the light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

There would be iron strength for character in the sentence :—

The assurance that we live under a reign of natural law enforces upon us with a solemn joy and an abiding fear the truth that what a man soweth that shall someone some time reap.

In the sentences authorised by the Church, and also in those which I have here submitted, there is no recognition of the minor, the less sublime but none the less profound and tragic needs of the human heart. These needs have a claim upon the attention of the teachers and preachers of the nation. A chief charm in the genius of Robert Louis Stevenson was his appreciation of such less martial virtues and ambitions ; and a superbly beautiful prayer by him might be incorporated as an opening sentence into the ritual of the Church, in this form :—

We need strength to forbear and persevere ;
 We need courage and gaiety and the quiet mind ;
 We want our friends to be spared to us, and our enemies to
 be softened towards us ;
 We crave success, if it be possible, in all our innocent
 endeavours ;
 If it be not possible, we desire the strength to encounter
 that which is to come ;
 That we may be brave in peril,
 Constant in tribulation,
 Temperate in wrath,
 And in all changes of fortune,
 And down to the gates of Death,
 Loyal and loving
 To one another.

The reasons for the adoption of opening words make it natural also to close a church meeting similarly with a brief statement of its spirit and aims.

It cannot be brought as an objection against closing words in a naturalistic religious rite that they are a weak—or, for that matter, a strong—imitation of the supernaturalistic benediction with which the present Church service ends. In the first place, it remains to be proved whether the old benediction is supernaturalistic; in the second, even if it is so, it is at the same time, and in spite thereof, a perfectly natural means towards a perfectly definite practical end. Concealed in the forms of faith in supernatural agencies there has often been an astonishing amount of ethical and naturalistic worship, as well as of common sense and shrewd appropriation of very evident secondary causes. The benediction, even if it is a calling down of the power of invisible agencies, is also a bringing of the meeting to an end by summarising its humanistic meaning.

But is the benediction, is the last verse of the 13th chapter of 2 Corinthians, supernaturalistic? Was it so meant by the writer? If one approaches the statement as one would if it were found in a book not dogmatically declared to be essentially spiritistic, one clearly sees that the writer of Corinthians was a man with deep insight into the workings of the human heart, and of the law of cause and effect as it operates in the development of character. His immediately preceding sentences are these:—"Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction. Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you. Greet one another with an holy kiss. All the saints salute you." And then follow the words from which the benediction is adapted: "The grace of the Lord Jesus

Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen."

Observe the logical sequence in the injunction and promise contained in the preceding verse: "Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you." Who can escape the meaning? It is not said, "The God of peace be with you, and you shall be perfect." The God of peace is not presented as an extraneous cause of perfection; but being perfect is assigned as the cause of the inherent presence of the God of peace. It is said:—If you are perfect, if you are of one mind, if you live in peace, then the beneficent influences and effects, the blessed powers which are inherent in being perfect, in one-mindedness, and in peace, will manifest themselves in your mind and in your life. The God of love and peace is the potency latent in love and peace, is the delivering, redeeming power which becomes active wherever the attributes in which it inheres are at hand.

Such also are the rigorous logic and the profound experience underlying the benediction. The friendship, the teaching, and the example of Jesus Christ are an immediate blessing to all who study the Gospel narrative, even although they do not believe that such a character ever actually existed. This benefit any priest of a naturalistic church, although he be no believer in the supernatural office of Christ, and even no believer in the authenticity of the record of Christ's life as a fact of history, may still strenuously desire to see bestowed upon every member of his Church. Such a one, therefore, would naturally in his heart pronounce this first blessing of the benediction, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you." Likewise with the second blessing—the "love of God." The operations and effects of all the morally

beneficent influences in the world are the operations and effects of love. Nay, they are love itself stored up and waiting to be dispensed. If God be all the good in the world, then God's love is the encircling love in the world, alert to bless anyone who craves and seeks it. And the third blessing, the "communion of the Holy Ghost," is that fellowship with the organic social spirit of which a man becomes conscious when he is inspired by the General Will of a group of human beings working together for the common good.

Therefore, as regards the benediction—to sum up what I have said—it is not necessary to discard it or modify it, in ridding Morning or Evening Prayer of every trace of spiritism. It only needs an understanding, on the part of the congregation assembled, that the Holy Ghost still means—as it denoted at first—the General Will of an Ethical Fellowship, that the love of God is the love latent but potent in the accumulated wisdom and beneficence of mankind, and that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is the quickening engendered by the very thought of such a character as he is depicted to have been.

The beauty and value of this interpretation is that, so far as it goes, it is beyond all controversy true and right. Even those who believe in Christian spiritism believe it also. They simply add spiritism to the ethical realism upon which I have been insisting.

Although the benediction as it stands is not essentially supernaturalistic, nevertheless it is not adequately universal. The references to the love of God and the communion of the Holy Ghost are comprehensive and general, and therefore will stand for all time and for all varieties of national circumstance unchanged. But "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" is only a particular instance of a universal spiritual grace which every noble

life dispenses. Wherever there has been a wise and good man, in proportion as he has been wise and good and has been felt to be so, just such grace has emanated from him as did from the Lord Jesus Christ. The universal experience, of which the influence of Jesus is an instance, is simply this : that individual persons who are good become primary and creative centres of spiritual life to all who are drawn into intimate contact with them. I am unable to formulate any adequate phrase which for a moment could stand comparison with the expression "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," and yet I would like to see universalised what this expression particularises. To say "The grace of Humanity" seems feeble in comparison ; it would need poetic genius to embody the new idea in language worthy of it. But because the fitting phrase is lacking, we cannot justify ourselves in omitting to communicate this universal principle ; for every year of human history demonstrates more clearly that Christ's is not the only redeeming personality, and that it is vain to hope that the followers of Buddha, Zoroaster and Confucius will ever prostrate themselves in exclusive and jealous loyalty before the founder of Christianity. It is unreasonable to cling to the uniqueness of the moral influence of Jesus ; therefore the Church's benediction, while naught can be said against it on the score of its being tainted with spiritism, is defective on account of its provincial emphasis of his redemptive work. On occasions, however, when attention was being naturally and legitimately drawn to mankind's special debt to him, the present form of benediction would be pre-eminently fitting.

The chief value and beauty of our interpretation of the benediction is that, to thousands to whom the words have meant less than nothing, it renders them not only

convincing to reason and the moral judgment, but inspiring. It has been my experience, now for twenty years, that one of the surest ways of drawing devout but puzzled Christians back into the Church is to reveal to them that, besides the old spiritistic meaning which was read into the Church's words, there is this other significance latent in them, tender in its humanity and healing in its message. Such has been the chief work of ethical societies—to reveal the natural and human value of what supernaturalists had jealously asserted to mean something quite different, and thus to reconcile Christians to the Church. This also was the great mission of Sir John Seeley's *Ecce Homo*. The natural and human side of Christ had been concealed from millions of people for ages ; but to-day there are at least thousands of Christians in England and America who only temporarily tolerate the supernaturalism still rampant, because of the underlying humanism, which has been all the time quietly doing whatever good had been credited to supernatural intelligences.

The renewing of loyalty to the Church due to the new revelation of this humane naturalism in Christianity is, however, by no means a supporting and strengthening of the obsolete elements of established religion. It is instead a replacing of the inanimate and petrified tissue of conventionalism, authority and supernaturalism with the living and growing substance of fresh moral insight and enthusiasm. By this process the whole Church will ultimately be transformed, and every vestige of unverifiable dogma will be discarded.

Let the churches go on communicating "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost." The outward continuity of verbal form, instead of retarding in the slightest degree, will

rather hasten the downfall of spiritism and the triumph of Jesus Christ as one servant of Humanity under natural law.

A benediction, as such, prescribed by a church, is in truth no more supernaturalistic than are the words with which the chairman of any political or commercial assembly declares the meeting ended. It differs from these only as an assembly met in devotion to ideal ends differs from one convened to advance mere material welfare. Equally capable of spiritistic interpretation also are the words "The meeting is now closed," pronounced by the chairman of a railway company ; for, when all is said and done, who knows whether disembodied intelligences may not be manipulating stocks and controlling the wills of railway magnates ?

To prevent my seeming to imply that there is any absolute necessity for retaining the usual benediction, let me say that there is no occasion for the closing words in a church service to have any resemblance whatever in outward form to the sentence now enjoined by the Church. It therefore would be well that occasionally the customary grace should give way to the seemingly contradictory but essentially identical message in Matthew Arnold's lines :—

Say ye, "The spirit of man has found new roads,
And we must leave the old faiths and walk therein" ?
Leave then the Cross, as ye have left carved gods,
But guard the fire within.

These lines from George Eliot would also act as a corrective to excessive reiteration of the customary grace :—

The undivided will to seek the good—
'Tis that compels the elements, and wrings
A human music from th' indifferent air.

The same bracing atmosphere fills this verse from Swinburne :—

A creed is a rod
And a crown is of night,
But this thing is God—
To be man with thy might,
To grow straight in the strength of thy spirit and live out
thy life as the light.

There is also a quatrain of Emerson's which is worthy of being repeated by all the people of every English-speaking nation for some centuries to come :—

So nigh is grandeur to the dust,
So near is God to man,
When Duty whispers low "Thou must,"
The youth replies "I can."

And if the following sentences were to be used daily throughout a lifetime, the depths of their wisdom would not be fathomed :—

There are two confessionals in one or the other of which thou must be shriven. Either thou must satisfy the demands of father, mother, or neighbour, that none of these may upbraid thee, or, neglecting the dictation of others, be absolved to thyself. If thou dost imagine that to dispense with the authority of conventional opinion and obey the inner law instead is a counsel of laxity, keep thou the commandments of the inner law but for one day.

The occasions ought not to be far apart when the main trend of the Church service is towards intellectual courage ; then the closing words might be these :—

We follow the truth, as we know it, whithersoever it may lead us ; for in our hearts we are well assured, that the truth which has made us free will in the end make us glad also.

Or these :—

If a man holds a belief, and yet suppresses doubts which arise about it in his mind, avoids men and books that call it in question, and regards those thoughts as impious which cannot be pursued without disturbing it—his life is one long sin against mankind.

An alternative to this would be :—

“There are two things,” said Mahomet, “which I abhor—the learned in his infidelities, and the fool in his devotions.”

Nothing is more important in a scheme of public worship than to avoid disproportionate emphasis of a single aspect of the moral ideal. Besides giving due place to the intellectual virtues now omitted, it is necessary that the Church service should also bestow fuller recognition than it does upon the modern sense of the spiritual solidarity of mankind. Only in this way would the people of the nation learn to look for redemption from within human society. Congregations should be reminded of the interdependence of our inner lives. To this end it would be helpful if the priest might say as a benediction :—

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing. There abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Or—

Let us remember our spiritual indebtedness to all who have shown anyone a kindness, acknowledging it in the hallowed words, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

Wider, but not less fraught with inspiration, is the spiritual sense of human unity embodied in these words :—

The future does not come from before to meet us—it is for ever streaming up from behind over our heads. Hence it is that we are never alone or unsupported. Moving with us and leading us on is the glorious company of those who gave the world their insight and spirit, and who thus have put themselves beyond death.

By such closing words the minds of the hearers would be fixed upon the principle, so important to be borne consciously in memory, that we have no existence apart from the community into which we were born and by which we are nourished. Such words would help to prevent us from cutting ourselves off from the common life about us, and thus committing spiritual suicide ; they would open up to us that joy and life abundant which is not to be found except in social service.

As it is well sometimes to introduce religious worship with a direct reminder of the end for which the congregation have come together, so for the same reason it may be advisable to close with a similar statement, such as this :—

Having spent this hour together in the contemplation of the higher nature of man, we go forth on our various paths in life to welcome the good wherever we can find it ; to join with it ; and to win more and more all the forces of nature and all the impulses of the human heart to the side of right and into the service of man.

Or such as this :—

We close this meeting with homage to the ideal of human excellence, each of us saying in his heart, “I love the Right ; Truth is beautiful within and without for evermore ; Virtue, I am thine ; save me ; use me ! Thee will I serve day and night, in great and small, that I may become one with thee.”

As an injunction which would strengthen the will in right-doing, nothing could be better, at the dismissal of a congregation, than for the priest to say :—

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might ;
for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom,
in the grave whither thou goest.

As an admonition against laxity of thought and deed,
this advice would be helpful :—

Remember these two things, and thou shalt never fall
into sin : within thyself is an ever-seeing eye, and in the
tissues of thy being are recorded thine every thought and
deed.

That the congregation may bear in mind that they cannot live without exercising an influence for good or evil, it would not be amiss to close the meeting occasionally by saying :—

Every life is a profession of faith, and exercises an inevitable and silent influence.

Or—

When we appear before men as seekers after good, so that they say among themselves, "These men are a living religion," thinkest thou that our teaching will not be heard ?

The meaning of the Church service could not be brought out more clearly than would be done by summing it up in the words :—

We dedicate our lives to the Law of Duty, which is our deepest memory, our widest vision, our most fervent hope, our bravest purpose, our tenderest pity, and our purest love.

The upward progress of the Church would be furthered every time this declaration from Emerson was repeated:—

There will be a new church, founded on moral science ;
at first cold and naked, a babe in a manger again ; the
algebra and mathematics of ethical law ; the church of men
to come, without shawms or psaltery or sackbut, but it will
have heaven and earth for its beams and rafters, science for
symbol and illustration ; it will fast enough gather beauty,
music, picture, poetry.

Sweet consolation would come to weary and restless
souls from the message :—

This is peace :

To conquer love of self and lust of life,
To tear deep-rooted passion from the breast,
To still the inward strife ;
To lay up lasting treasure
Of perfect service rendered, duties done
In charity, soft speech and stainless days ;
These riches shall not fade away in life,
Nor any death dispraise.

Two passages which would also prove to be veritable
benedictions, despite their variance from the accepted
form, I cannot resist the temptation of citing :—

Bring your doctrines, your priesthoods, your precepts,
yea, even the inner devotion of your souls, before the
tribunal of Conscience. She is no man's and no god's
vicar, but the supreme judge of men and of gods.

Where the anchors that faith has cast
Are dragging in the gale,
We are quietly holding fast
To the things that cannot fail.

I would likewise commend three stanzas from Swin-
burne's " Songs before Sunrise," each of which for two
special reasons it would be expedient and wise to use, either
as the opening or closing sentence of a religious service.
The first reason is their imaginative beauty of expression,

which puts them on a level with any of the most exalted passages in the Old or New Testament. The second is that in these stanzas some outside being or power is addressed, as is customary in all forms of prayer and supplication ; yet, as is well known, it was not the infinite Creator of the universe to whom the poet appealed, but the Ideal Republic, the visioned society that is to be. The first of the three to which I allude is this :—

Mother of man's time-travelling generations,
 Breath of his nostrils, heart-blood of his heart,
 God above all gods worshipped of all nations,
 Light beyond light, law beyond law, thou art.

The second lifts the soul still higher, and with even steadier poise :—

Thy face is as a sword smiting in sunder
 Shadows and chains and dreams and iron things ;
 The sea is dumb before thy face, the thunder
 Silent, the skies are narrower than thy wings.

The third, if not so sublime, is more intimate and tender :—

All old grey histories hiding thy clear features,
 O secret spirit and sovereign, all men's tales,
 Creeds woven of men, thy children and thy creatures,
 They have woven for vestures of thee and for veils.

The same high level of inspiration is attained in this stanza from Wordsworth's "Ode to Duty" :—

Stern Lawgiver ! yet thou dost wear
 The Godhead's most benignant grace ;
 Nor know we anything so fair
 As is the smile upon thy face ;
 Flowers laugh before thee on their beds,
 And fragrance in thy footing treads ;
 Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong,
 And the most ancient heavens, through thee, are fresh and strong.

And also in these other lines from the same poem :—

Oh, let my weakness have an end !
 Give unto me, made lowly wise,
 The spirit of self-sacrifice ;
 The confidence of reason give ;
 And in the light of Truth thy bondman let me live.

More daring in assertion, but equally reverent in intent, are the words put by Browning into the mouth of Paracelsus :—

Make no more giants, God,
 But elevate the race at once ! We ask
 To put forth just our strength, our human strength,
 All starting fairly, all equipped alike,
 Gifted alike, all eagle-eyed, true-hearted—
 See if we cannot beat thine angels yet !

Again, in Shelley's "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" is immortally expressed the reverence of religious devotion. I give the opening stanza, with the parts grouped rhythmically, and not according to metrical form, because here the rhythm is more vital than the metre, and in order the better to bring out the meaning :—

The awful shadow of some unseen Power floats though
 unseen amongst us,
 Visiting this various world with as inconstant wing as
 summer winds that creep from flower to flower.
 Like moonbeams that behind some piny mountain shower,
 it visits with inconstant glance each human heart and
 countenance ;—
 Like hues and harmonies of evening,—like clouds in
 starlight widely spread,—like memory of music fled,
 —like aught that for its grace may be dear, and yet
 dearer for its mystery.

And what finer benediction could end a church

service than Shelley's closing invocation of this same visitant?—

Let thy power, which like the truth
Of nature on my passive youth
Descended, to my onward life supply
Its calm—to one who worships thee,
And every form containing thee ;
Whom, Spirit fair, thy spells did bind
To fear himself, and love all human kind.

As a last suggestion, I offer these lines from Mr Zangwill's poem entitled "At the Worst," which give the eternal answer of conscience to the doubts of scepticism :—

God lives as much as in the days of yore,

In fires of human love and work and song,
In wells of human tears that pitying throng,
In thunder-clouds of human wrath at wrong.

The burning bush doth not the more consume,
New branches shoot where old no more illume,
Eternal splendour flames upon the gloom.

Perchance, O ye that toil on, though forlorn,
By your souls' travail, your own noble scorn,
The very God ye crave is being born.

CHAPTER VIII

THE LITANY, PRAYERS AND COLLECTS

ORDINARILY, in summing up comprehensively the Christian religion, its doctrines are reduced to two—the immortality of the soul and the personality of God. The impression which such a summation gives is that in the Christian scheme these two ideas are co-ordinate and equally eminent and dominant. And if one were to examine the prevalent preaching of the day, one would find confirmation for this impression. Indeed, one might even be led to the conclusion that of the two doctrines the controlling one was the immortality of the soul, or the life after death. One would think that Christianity's supreme discipline through the ages had been to turn the attention of people away from this world and its transient concerns to another, with infinite and abiding interests. The result is that when one for the first time compares popular preaching and the ordinary summation of Christian thought with the Book of Common Prayer, one is startled to find that in the latter the doctrine of immortality is scarcely present, and, where it does appear in the regular services, it has no prominence, but, on the contrary, as a regulating or guiding principle plays no rôle whatever. It does not permeate and saturate the sentiment of the Prayer Book, as one would expect to find if it were one of the two vital principles of the

Christian religion. Never can the effect of the Prayer Book be to stimulate into intensity of passion a yearning for a life after death and a denial of this world's goods and claims. Not only, however, is the doctrine of immortality thus conspicuous for its absence as an animating principle, but its very opposite is in complete ascendancy.

It is therefore thoroughly in harmony with the character of the Book of Common Prayer, that thus far in this volume I have treated, because of their pre-eminence in it, first the Ten Commandments and then the Lord's Prayer—in neither of which documents is there any hint of the doctrine or even of the hope of immortality, but in both of which, on the contrary, religious aspiration and prophecy are only towards the future of cities and nations. It was fitting, then, to pass from them on to the Creeds, in which the doctrine appears, but only subordinately, and not as if it constituted the mainspring to the Christian life. It is only in the Burial Service and the Articles that the thought of a life after death is the leading sentiment; it is not so even in the Order for the Visitation of the Sick. And, fortunately, assent to the Articles is not required of the laity, and even from the clergy only a general agreement is demanded; so that the prominence of the doctrine of a life after death in them does not impugn the accuracy of my statement. In the Burial Service we find the Prayer Book to show least signs of fine literary workmanship, liturgical construction, religious insight, and human sympathy. Undoubtedly the Burial Service does imply—presumably to the end of consoling the mourners—that this life is all vanity, and that the only thing worth enduring it for is to escape from it into bliss beyond; but, if this were the true sentiment of the Anglican Church, it is hard to believe that the regular services would not have been framed so as to cultivate in the souls

of men, throughout their earth-life, an ecstatic anticipation of the life beyond ; yet they certainly are not so framed.

I invite the attention of my readers to the contents of the Litany, the prayers and collects, especially in relation to the idea of a life after death as compared with the idea of the continued life of the generations of men on earth. My object in considering this special relation is not negative, nor is it arbitrary ; on the contrary, a close study of the Litany, prayers and collects revealed to me as the chief import and trend of the Prayer Book an interest in social life on earth—in health, justice, prosperity, wealth, peace and power. It revealed to me that the Prayer Book as a whole is true in its discipline to the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer, from which all thought of a life after death is absent, and that an intense absorption in the earth-life of man is its distinguishing note. It revealed that the Prayer Book is millennial and not supermundane in trend.

Take, for instance, the most superb literary and liturgical composition of the Church—the Litany. Its form is so elaborate, and yet withal so simple and chaste, that even when one scarcely attends to its substance the spirit of the participant in its responses is satisfied and uplifted. The essence of its substance is the love of social justice. Let us pass over its initial outcries for mercy to be said by priest and congregation, as they are mainly an acknowledgment of the Trinity, and as I have already treated of the threefold unity of moral experience when considering the Creeds. We come then to the supplications to be spoken by the priest, with the responses "Spare us, good Lord" and "Good Lord, deliver us" by the people. In order that the form may not hide the mental processes implied and involved in the petitions, we must think what the Litany would be if, instead of

being in the form of prayer, it were simply a direct statement of desires. No one will deny that persons so much moved as to cry out sincerely in public assembly "Good Lord, deliver us," must in their own hearts desire the things for which they pray ; and if this be so, it will be possible to discard the imperative mood of petition and reshape the contents into simple indicative expressions of desire. Such a transformation would perhaps destroy some of the emotional intensity of the prayer, but not its contents or significance. Let us also, in order to demonstrate how little of the substance of this utterance is in any way dependent upon supernaturalistic presuppositions, drop from it all phrases containing any possible implications of this kind. Let us likewise find universal human equivalents, if we can, for any references to Jesus that might seem to impute to him powers unique in kind. His life and death, as regards their influence, are not without parallels in the life and death of others ; our debt to him, even if greater, is similar to our debt to others. When, for instance, it is said in the Litany that we have been redeemed by his most precious blood, there might seem to be involved a denial of the fact that we are also, at least in part, redeemed by the sacrifice of others besides Jesus. To attain a universalised formula, however, we need only to widen the reference concerning redemption by his blood so as to include the vicarious sacrifice of all martyrs to the cause of humanity.

Modified in this manner, the main body of the Litany might assume some such shape as this :—

That our offences and the offences of our forefathers be not remembered against us, nor vengeance of our sins taken ; that we who have been delivered by the life and death of many shall be spared, and that we may escape the anger of the just,

We most earnestly desire.

From all evil and mischief ; from sin, from the crafts and assaults of malicious and lying persons ; from the wrath of the good and from everlasting condemnation,

We long to be delivered.

From all blindness of heart ; from pride, vainglory and hypocrisy ; from envy, hatred and malice and all uncharitableness,

We long to be delivered.

From fornication and all other deadly sin ; from the world and the flesh and from the plots of all mischief-makers and tempters,

We long to be delivered.

From lightning and tempest ; from plague, pestilence and famine ; from battle and murder and from sudden death,

We long to be delivered.

From all sedition, privy conspiracy and rebellion ; from all false doctrine, heresy and schism ; from hardness of heart and contempt for wisdom and the commandments of duty,

We long to be delivered.

In all time of our tribulation ; in all time of our wealth ; in the day of judgment and in the hour of death,

We long to be delivered.

That the holy Church universal may be ruled and governed in the right way,

We most earnestly desire.

That our King and Governor may be kept and strengthened in righteousness and holiness of life and in devotion to the nation's welfare,

We most earnestly desire.

That his heart may be ruled in the faith, fear and love of Duty,

We most earnestly desire.

That he may find his defence and support in doing justice, and therein gain victory over all our enemies,

We most earnestly desire.

That all bishops, priests and deacons may understand the laws of the universe in which we live, and the principles of

humanity and justice, and that both by their preaching and living they may set these forth and show them accordingly,
We most earnestly desire.

That the lords of the Council and all the nobility may be endued with grace, wisdom and understanding,
We most earnestly desire.

That the magistrates shall execute justice and maintain truth,
We most earnestly desire.

That all our people may be blessed with health and secured in wealth,
We most earnestly desire.

That all nations may abide in unity, peace and concord,
We most earnestly desire.

That in our hearts we may love and dread Righteousness, and diligently live after its commandments,
We most earnestly desire.

That all our people may become more willing to hear new truth and receive it with pure affection, and may bring forth the fruits of wisdom,
We most earnestly desire.

That we may bring into the way of truth all such as have erred and are deceived,
We most earnestly desire.

That we may strengthen such as do stand, comfort and help the weak-hearted, raise up them that fall, and finally beat down all malice and falsehood under our feet,
We most earnestly desire.

That we may succour, help and comfort all that are in danger, necessity and tribulation,
We most earnestly desire.

That all may be preserved who travel by land or by water, all women labouring of child, all sick persons and young children, and that pity may be shown upon all prisoners and captives,
We most earnestly desire.

To defend and provide for fatherless children and widows, and all that are desolate and oppressed,

We most earnestly desire.

To have mercy upon all men,

We most earnestly desire.

To forgive our enemies, persecutors and slanderers, and to turn their hearts,

We most earnestly desire.

To give and preserve to the use of all, the kindly fruits of the earth, so as in due time they may enjoy them,

We most earnestly desire.

To feel true repentance, to forgive one another's sins, negligences and ignorances, and to be endued with the holy spirit of love, to amend our lives according to its principles,

We most earnestly desire.

Possibly the Litany when thus modified is more consistent than before with our deeper modern sense of human responsibility ; it may better help us to realise that we ourselves must defend the fatherless and the oppressed than if we merely beseech the Creator to do so. Also the meaning in some passages is driven closer home ; for example, in the supplication (as it now stands in the Litany) that it may please God to illuminate all bishops with knowledge of his Word, the psychological implication is that the suppliants wish that bishops should investigate the laws of the universe ; but how much better, then, to say so ! Likewise less unequivocal is the modified form of expressing the desire that our spiritual guides should go behind the written words of the Bible and examine for themselves the moral facts and principles which, happily, the Bible-writers did study first-hand, and only afterwards committed to writing. When once we have discovered the psychology underlying the Litany, our minds become free to appreciate its main trend—as

not towards another world but towards the transfiguration of this—its catholic sympathy with suffering, its profound respect and tender deference for all human beings, and the intense ethic passion which inspires each clause and phrase.

Although Morning and Evening Prayer are not so absolutely free from the looking to a life of the individual beyond death as is the Litany, still they are practically the same in sentiment and tendency. While the idea of a life after death sometimes appears, it is not reiterated or emphasised ; it is not presented with intensity of emotion or imaginative splendour. The effect of the service is not to bring into the foreground of the mind of the worshippers the thought of another world beyond the grave. The theatre of the spiritual life is this world, and in the centre of the foreground is the thought of moral purity and the service of others. Let one read again, for instance, the opening sentences which I have given in the previous chapter ; there is no hint in them of an interest in a life beyond death. And now let one read, from the same point of view, the introductory exhortation to be said by the priest :—

Dearly beloved brethren, the Scripture moveth us in sundry places to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness ; and that we should not dissemble nor cloke them before the face of Almighty God our heavenly Father ; but confess them with an humble, lowly, penitent and obedient heart ; to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same, by his infinite goodness and mercy. And although we ought at all times humbly to acknowledge our sins before God ; yet ought we most chiefly so to do, when we assemble and meet together to render thanks for the great benefits that we have received at his hands, to set forth his most worthy praise, to hear his most holy Word, and to ask those things which are requisite and necessary, as well for the body as the soul. Wherefore I

pray and beseech you, as many as are here present, to accompany me with a pure heart, and humble voice, unto the throne of the heavenly grace, saying after me ;

We might possibly, from the point of view of humanistic science and national democracy, find here many little points deserving adverse criticism and needing either revision or removal ; but even such defects are not so much inherent in the exhortation itself as in a false interpretation of religious language. Persons are liable either to make a fetish of the Bible and assign an absolute rigour to theological terms, or else to turn away altogether, with an equally reprehensible narrowness, from religious associations and phrases. If a disbeliever in the Bible as a revelation from another world would read the Prayer Book as he would any other literary composition, he would, for instance, take no umbrage at being invited to confess his transgressions because "the Scripture moveth us" so to do. In the first place, it is literally true that the Bible does move us to confess our wickednesses, and that no other national literature does so. It must also be conceded by the extremest believer in reason as opposed to authority, if he be a man of trained literary sense, that the Bible, like any other great national literature, retains for him a relative authority—that which poetic genius, moral insight and passion inevitably exercise over us all. And when the Bible is reinstated in the reverence it deserves as a purely human document, not the extremest rebellion against supernaturalism will cause anyone to resent being asked to practise any spiritual discipline which the Bible commends, or because the Bible commends it. Even the expression "the throne of the heavenly grace" will be accepted by the worshippers of reason as a most happy characterisation of the moral ideal—the centre of spiritual sovereignty.

The General Confession, which follows the invitation to pray, is equally without any suggestion of interest in any other world than that which is now and here :—

Almighty and most merciful Father ; We have erred, and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done ; And we have done those things which we ought not to have done ; And there is no health in us. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders. Spare thou them, O God, which confess their faults. Restore thou them that are penitent ; According to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesu our Lord. And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake ; That we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, To the glory of thy holy Name. Amen.

Here again the severest criticism can find no fault except such as is due either to the interpretation of all religious terminology in a supernaturalistic sense, or to the false rigour of the old-fashioned way of treating the language of religious emotion. For instance, because the phrase “and there is no health in us” appears in the Prayer Book, many would read into it the whole doctrine of total depravity ; but viewed as literary expression or as spontaneous utterance it contains no such implication. Were any dramatic poet to represent some character as saying of himself, when in a state of intense spiritual discouragement, “There is no health in me,” everyone would intuitively understand it to be the language of emotion ; and were anyone in real life thus to exaggerate his own moral demerit, we should only love him the better—not exacting from a man speaking under inward excitement the same measured temperance of phrase which would be required of a scientific lecturer.

The Absolution or Remission of Sins, to be pronounced by the priest alone, contains in the final clause a reference to the belief and hope in immortality :—

Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness, and live ; and hath given power, and commandment, to his Ministers, to declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the Absolution and Remission of their sins : He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel. Wherefore let us beseech him to grant us true repentance, and his holy Spirit, that those things may please him, which we do at this present ; and that the rest of our life hereafter may be pure, and holy ; so that at the last we may come to his eternal joy ; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Here the centre of attention is the forgiveness of sins, and the power of the clergy to declare the same. The introduction of the hope of immortality at the close of the pronouncement is not vitally necessitated, but is a mechanical addition. What probably may give much more offence to the confirmed humanist and democrat, however, is the implied possession by the clergy of an exclusive power to pronounce the remission of sins ; but even here the offence must be traced to the supernaturalistic interpretation of the office of the priest. If he were regarded as simply the representative of the nation, and if he had been democratically elected to his office, it would be altogether suitable that he and only he should pronounce the remission of sins. If it be a fact that the community is the power that forgives, and he speaks in the name of the community, what ground of objection can we have to the exclusive delegation of this function to him ? In the case of ordinary criminals, only the Home Secretary can pronounce the Sovereign's pardon. Altogether

anarchic and individualistic is the notion that any and everybody, however unofficial, may declare the absolution of sins. Once transform the organisation of the Church in accordance with the principles of democracy, and enlighten the people as to the national significance of religion and its forms, and no enlightened humanist could wish to revise a word of this part of the Absolution. Even the statement that God pardons men if, besides repenting, they "unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel," must be altogether acceptable to the naturalist in religion ; for he will be the first to admit that the New Testament, despite whatever spiritism it may contain, is essentially an ethical message, which must be believed if a man's repentance is to lead him to a new life.

In all the remaining constant items of Morning and Evening Prayer there is no allusion to the idea or the hope of immortality except in the Creed, the prayers for the King and the Royal Family, and the prayer of St Chrysostom. The prayer for the King closes, "And finally after this life he may attain everlasting joy and felicity." In that for the Royal Family, the words are, "And bring them to thine everlasting kingdom." The prayer of St Chrysostom closes, "Granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting." Surely, such being the utterly insignificant rôle which the hope of immortality plays in Morning and Evening Service, nobody can maintain that it is one of the cardinal doctrines of the Anglican religion.

When one passes to the collects arranged for the days and seasons throughout the Church's year, one immediately notes in them a drop both in the ethical insight and in the sincerity of the style. They awaken a strong suspicion that they are not so much genuine breathings forth of religious experience and aspiration as

mechanical compositions by ecclesiastics, made to order, as introductions to the epistle and gospel readings. As the ethical insight is lacking, we find what we might naturally expect : in place of the homely, simple speech of the Litany there is a stilted and splendid rhetoric ; in place of cries of sympathy and love there are substituted avowals of doctrinal belief in a post-mortem day of judgment, in a resurrection of the body and in a life after death. Take, for instance, the collect for the first Sunday in Advent. Underlying its structure is the dogmatic contrast between "now in the time of this mortal life" and "the last day," and between the humility of Jesus Christ as he was on earth and his glorious majesty as he will be then. It reads :—

Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility ; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious Majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal, through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. Amen.

Again, the thought in the collect for St Stephen's Day is touching in itself, and yet its very fullness and swing betray that it was written by some prosperous Bishop Blougram. The whole prayer is a pose ; it cannot have been written by one who had suffered for testifying to belief in Jesus Christ, and it ought not to be uttered by those who have not been persecuted for their faith in him. It runs thus :—

Grant, O Lord, that in all our sufferings here upon earth for the testimony of thy truth, we may stedfastly look up to heaven, and by faith behold the glory that shall be revealed ; and, being filled with the holy Ghost, may

learn to love and bless our persecutors by the example of thy first Martyr Saint Stephen, who prayed for his murderers to thee, O blessed Jesus, who standest at the right hand of God to succour all those that suffer for thee, our only Mediator and Advocate. Amen.

Another instance of constrained rhetoric and forced metaphor, such as betrays a similar insincerity, is to be found in the collect for the Innocents' Day. No external evidence is required to bring the reader of it to the conviction that the person who wrote it was at his wits' end to find some parallel in the experience of his generation to the slaughter of the innocents; and that, finding none, he tricked up an analogy comparing our vices, mortified in repentance—as if slaughtered by Christ—to the innocent children slaughtered by Herod. But what could be more preposterous than that vices should be compared with innocent children? One can scarcely believe that an honest Christian could have done such dishonest literary work. The collect stands:—

O Almighty God, who out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast ordained strength, and madest infants to glorify thee by their deaths; Mortify and kill all vices in us, and so strengthen us by thy grace, that by the innocency of our lives, and constancy of our faith even unto death, we may glorify thy holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

After this, I need not proceed further to analyse the collects.

Let us turn to the “prayers and thanksgivings, upon several occasions, to be used before the two final prayers of the Litany, or of Morning and Evening Prayer.” The judgment to be passed upon them from the truly scientific point of view is different from that generally passed upon them even by the advanced thinkers who call themselves

theistic evolutionists. These are in the habit of approving of prayers for purely spiritual blessings, but of deprecating supplications for rain, for fair weather, for a return of plenty in time of dearth and famine, for peace in time of war and tumults, and for health in periods of plague or sickness. But I would venture to think that, underneath the absurdities of these petitions for material help, there is profound scientific and religious insight, which will soon justify itself in the eyes of all men. If there be any fact distinguishing our modern life, it is that human power over nature has multiplied ten thousandfold within one century. Formerly, man's physical environment had control over him, as it still has over the lower animals ; but within the last century he has seized upon the secret of controlling it. Consequently, many of the most fickle and elusive phenomena of nature have become already obedient to him ; and he can now forestall calamities by introducing preventive causes in anticipation. Accordingly, if the prayer for rain—to take an example—be compared with modern demands of the people upon the resources of science and invention, it is seen to be as nothing in the audacity of its request. The prayer reads :—

O God, . . . send us, we beseech thee, in this our necessity, such moderate rain and showers, that we may receive the fruits of the earth to our comfort, and to thy honour ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

In the future, when God is identified with human foresight and good-will, this prayer will be accounted absurd by scientific thinkers, not because God does not interfere with the order of physical phenomena, but because, instead of merely sending moderate rains after a drought has already done mischief, he will be expected

to prevent anxiety altogether by extensive systems of irrigation. While the immediate cause of damage to crops and life may be the weather, its ultimate cause is nearly always the preventable ignorance or inconsiderateness, or both, of human agents. Nearly all great physical disasters, even those that seem at first wholly removed from moral causes, are to be traced finally to selfishness on the part of some class of persons. Untold sufferings, endured by the innocent as if inevitable in the nature of things, ensue generally from the apathy or wickedness of somebody at some time. This wickedness may not have been fully self-conscious, and certainly the awful calamities which it was sure to entail were not vividly anticipated ; but sufferers will some day learn to pray with sufficient importunity to human intelligence and human love, to end these causes of calamity.

The prayers for rain and for deliverance from natural catastrophes lead our thought inevitably to a consideration of the general relation between righteousness and happiness. The majority of people have for countless ages felt that some great mystery lurks in the evident fact that righteousness leads to universal happiness, and iniquity to general misery and towards death. They have seen no inherent and self-evident necessity whereby righteousness should produce universal welfare and misery emanate from moral transgression ; and, seeing no such inherent necessity, they have logically been forced to the inference that some outside person has by extraneous means linked general welfare on to righteousness. If nobody connected the two, the connection is, they think, an inexplicable mystery. If I am not mistaken, this sense of a mystery in the relation of morality to outward prosperity is the ultimate cause of almost all belief in an overruling personal agency dominating man and the universe.

It leads to the setting up not of righteousness, not of good conduct, and not of the power inherent in good conduct, as God, but of another power who hitches prosperity on to good conduct. Righteousness, they say, in itself is admirable and altogether comprehensible ; so is prosperity both good and self-explanatory ; but that the latter should follow in the train of the former proves that there is a Power higher than either, because constraining both.

This sense of mystery has so dominated in the religious consciousness of the past, and is so prevalent to-day, that many mistake it for the very essence of piety. It leads to spiritism ; it engenders fear ; it drives to an abject surrender of reason ; for when connections of events are traced back to the arbitrary will of a person, the human judgment is cornered and cannot escape. To persons in whom the religious consciousness chiefly consists of the sense of mystery, the notion of getting rid of the mystery appears impious and atheistic. They fear that the consequence would be a losing of all reverence for righteousness, and they seem even to dread lest the fact will be denied that to righteousness belongs happiness, if the belief in an overruling connector of righteousness with happiness should cease. But surely here is a case where the cart is put before the horse. Why will the connection of two events, which led to a certain explanation of them, cease to be seen, simply because the explanation has been found inadequate to account for it ? And why will the beneficence of the connection be any less an occasion for rejoicing after a theory, formed to account for it, has been explained away, than before ? If it were possible to render perfectly self-evident and simple the connection of general welfare with righteousness, it is my conviction that, although the sense of mysteriousness would be ended, the human significance and worth

of the connection would be infinitely enhanced ; the whole heart could then be given to righteousness as the cause of human happiness, and all the energy be converted into a means towards the supreme end of righteousness.

What is, then, the real explanation of the fact that to righteousness belongs life, and to wickedness pain, horror and death ? It is, in the first place, this : *Only after men have discovered that a line of conduct leads to general prosperity have they called it righteous.* This mental sequence scatters absolutely the mysteriousness of the connection. Whatever was seen to lead to general prosperity was named *moral* ; but if such was the case, there was nothing at all wonderful in the fact that righteous conduct led to general prosperity. How can there be a mystery or a sense of mystery about the fact that the natural cause of a thing produces the thing ? That is the very opposite of a mystery. It would be a staggering puzzle if in one instance an event which had been scientifically verified to be the universal precedent of a certain effect did not inevitably produce that effect. There is nothing further to be explained in the connection of any two events when the whole of our experience and organised common sense have led us to anticipate the connection ; for then the sense of mystery never arises.

If the matter is so very simple as I affirm, it may be asked : How is it possible that the human mind has almost universally come to possess a sense of unutterable mystery when face to face with the spread of woe from wickedness and of happiness from virtue ? The answer, however, is close at hand. Primitive statesmen, seeing that a certain line of conduct tended towards the degeneration and collapse of the tribe or nation, condemned it and subjected it to social and political censure. They

branded it as wrong, and attached adventitious penalties in threat upon any who pursued it. Then the unthinking multitude, not seeing the remoter calamity that would ensue to the nation, or possibly not caring about it, were acutely aware of the word and authority of the ruler and of his penalties. Thus the multitude plainly saw the connection between wrong-doing and the command of a person in power, and the punishment inflicted by that person ; and they accordingly abstained from the acts stigmatised as transgressions because they were so commanded and threatened. And if they did the acts, it was because these were immediately pleasant to them, or of benefit permanently to their favoured few.

We have thus not only explained fully the connection of general prosperity with righteousness, but have also accounted adequately for the origin of the sense of mystery, and have proved its unjustifiability. By statesmen, that conduct has always been regarded as right which they thought served the nation, in distinction from that which benefited a few at the expense of the nation. But hitherto morality has not been considered by the people as a means towards the permanent preservation of the nation, but as a thing commanded, an end in itself, a line of conduct unrelated to the point whither it led. Now, however, with the advent of democracy, when all the citizens of a country are beginning to partake of the responsibilities of political government, the whole people will come to regard morality as the sum-total of the means by which their nation would be able to live in health, wealth, efficiency, beauty and truth for ever and ever. We shall thus return to the point of view of the Old Testament prophets and law-givers. We shall call only that righteousness which makes for general welfare ; and then, with the mystery gone, the moral law will become irresistible in its cogency,

while remaining for ever flexible and delicately adjusting itself to new emergencies.

But there are still a depth and a complexity of the inner moral life which must be analysed. How is it that the human spirit intuitively bows in reverence and awe before every deed of self-sacrifice for the general welfare? Here is a connection supremely wonderful, because it inevitably arouses disinterested admiration and in the highest degree a sense of the sublime. It is man's moral nature that makes us pause in admiration; it is not that certain lines of conduct lead to universal welfare, but that those lines should charm and fascinate the heart and will of an individual being, and compel him to pursue them even at the cost of every future pleasure and of his own conscious existence. The fact that the members of no tribe have ever sanctioned those deeds which they thought made for the destruction of the tribe is not denied by any anthropologist. Never among any people is that man disinterestedly admired and praised who has knowingly, in the judgment of the people, risked the existence of the tribe for his own gain. To that which has seemed the nation-benefiting deed, as contrasted with that which would benefit the individual at the expense of the nation, has always been rendered disinterested applause. If there be anywhere a ground for the sense of mystery, it is not that to the causes of universal welfare is attached universal welfare, but that to these causes is attached the inmost heart and soul of every child of humanity, so that in fact that attachment is the essence and reality of his being.

Even here, however, there is of course no justification for the sense of mystery. According to the law of natural selection, it is easy to show that those tribes among whom deeds destructive to the community were applauded and honoured soon became extinct. It is easy

to see, on the other hand, that a habit of disinterestedly approving deeds of self-sacrifice for the general welfare would be a tribal asset of incalculable value. It would tend to the survival of the tribe, and thereby to the perpetuation of the peculiarity, according to the law of the transmission of innate characteristics. But while there is no mystery here, in the sense of a thing which cannot be fully explained to the discursive understanding, there is ground for an emotion in many respects akin to the sense of mystery: the emotion of unbounded and intuitive admiration. Someone has maintained that there are two kinds of mystery—that of midnight, where nothing is seen and all is only dimly felt or suspected, and that of midday, where everything is so fully seen that the splendour dazzles and almost blinds. The awfulness of the incomprehensible is one thing; the sublimity of the self-evident is another, and a deeper and higher. The self-evident is by its very nature the ultimate, in the sense that that which explains everything else cannot itself need explanation. But on that account it only the more arouses our reverence.

Such is man's moral intuition. At most we can trace its natural history and dissect it into its psychological and sociological elements. We can see, for instance, that a man's volitional response to the ethical imperative is the Will of the Community, the organic unity of Man living in him and constituting his inmost self. We may not call this a mystery, because it is all clear; but it is mystic. The universal, the general, is seen at the centre of our clearest consciousness to constitute the reality of the individual and the particular. It is mystic, because surrender to conscience satisfies the inmost and deepest craving of our nature, and thus creates the sense of intimacy and identity with the absolute reality of things. We

feel and see ourselves in essence to be one with Perfect Goodness and Creative Power, and not alien to the Vision of the Beauty Ineffable which entrances us.

The Litany and, in general, the prayers of Morning and Evening Service, are, like the Lord's Prayer, cries of the individual will, conscious of inward, mystic identity with the General Will and challenging the General Will existent in others, and in the nation-Church and the nation-State, to establish its dominion.

CHAPTER IX

ENGLISH POETRY AND THE PSALTER

IN pre-Reformation times, the Psalter was sung through once every week ; since then, even where the clergy have carried out their full legal duty, it has been repeated only once every month ; and it is probable that after the next revision of the nation's manual of Divine Service, to meet the spiritual needs of the people, it will be sung through only once a year. But it is more likely still, inasmuch as the psalms are not all equally edifying, that a number will be wholly discarded, while others will be repeated even oftener than they are at present ; and the special ones which are now repeated most frequently, will be used least often of all.

There are two reasons which will lead to such a revolution. In the first place, the national situations depicted by the psalmists are as little like those in which the English people has found itself during the last thousand years as can well be imagined. Nothing could be more unlike the fate of Israel than the destiny of Britain. Equally dissimilar are the temperament and the poetic imagination of the two nations ; and a still greater contrast exists between their conceptions of the universe and its relations to human ideals. In the second place, English poetry is rich in native psalms, for which a place will surely be found in Morning and Evening Prayer,

the moment our spiritual guides become as alert to the national significance of religious worship as were the Hebrew statesmen of old.

In illustration of the unfitness of the psalms for the people of England, let us take Psalm 95, the "Venite, exultemus Domino," which is now said or sung always at Morning Prayer, except on Easter Day. Of this psalm, Wellhausen says :—

An exhortation, spoken by God, begins abruptly in the last line of v. 7. There is no link between the two halves of the psalm. Probably there is no real connection between them ; for the exhortation, vv. 8–11, accords illy with the exultation of vv. 1–7. Two fragments seem to have been united. The end, as well as the beginning, of the second fragment is lost, v. 11 not being a conclusion. Yet vv. 1–7a may perhaps form a whole.

From a purely literary point of view, a bad patchwork like this is not worthy of the eminence it possesses in the Anglican Church. The first half is altogether below the merit of the profoundly ethical Introductory Sentences, Exhortation to Prayer, General Confession, Absolution, and the Lord's Prayer, which, together with the versicles, constitute the service up to the point where Psalm 95 is introduced. The first seven verses of it are exclusively a nature-hymn—that is, a song in praise not of goodness or of the power of goodness, but of physical might. It is used by the Church evidently for the sole reason that it opens with an invitation to praise the Lord, and an invitation to praise him is needed at this point in the service. But this invitation constitutes only the first two verses of the psalm. They are :—

O come, let us sing unto the Lord : let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation.

Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving : and show ourselves glad in him with psalms.

The use of these two verses by no means justifies the following five, which are full of prostration before mere power :—

For the Lord is a great God : and a great King above all gods.

In his hand are all the corners of the earth : and the strength of the hills is his also.

The sea is his, and he made it : and his hands prepared the dry land.

O come, let us worship, and fall down : and kneel before the Lord our Maker.

For he is the Lord our God : and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

There are many other verses in the psalms which would have been more in harmony than these with the spirit of Anglicanism, and which could have been attached with perfect literary smoothness to the two verses of invitation to praise. If well done, such a joining of pieces is its own justification. Unity of design is a sufficient excuse for it ; and if that is lacking the composition is to be condemned not because it is patchwork, but because, like Psalm 95, it is carelessly made.

Take now the second portion of this psalm. It reads :—

To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts : as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness ;

When your fathers tempted me : proved me, and saw my works.

Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said : It is a people that do err in their hearts, for they have not known my ways.

Unto whom I sware in my wrath : that they should not enter into my rest.

These verses cannot have the force of a direct reference

to some event in English history ; nor have they great literary merit or a tone which is finely inspiring.

Even psalms which are exquisitely beautiful often contain nothing parallel to the experience of the British nation ; and, besides, in them the sentiment of patriotic devotion is sometimes vitiated by a violent craving for revenge upon enemies, which is shocking to our sense of righteousness and is degrading to us in proportion as we allow ourselves to be moved by it. Take, for instance, Psalm 137, which, although so familiar, I will reprint here, in order that its fitness for a manual of Anglican worship may be critically tested. Artistically it is perfect ; but ethically it is rendered hideous by the sentiment of the last two verses :—

By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept : when
we remembered thee, O Sion.

As for our harps, we hanged them up : upon the trees
that are therein.

For they that led us away captive required of us then a
song, and melody, in our heaviness : Sing us one of the
songs of Sion.

How shall we sing the Lord's song : in a strange land ?

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem : let my right hand forget
her cunning.

If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the
roof of my mouth : yea, if I prefer not Jerusalem in my
mirth.

Remember the children of Edom, O Lord, in the day
of Jerusalem : how they said, Down with it, down with
it, even to the ground.

O daughter of Babylon, wasted with misery : yea, happy
shall he be that rewardeth thee, as thou hast served us.

Blessed shall he be that taketh thy children : and
throweth them against the stones.

It is conceivable that a calamity might have happened to the people of London such as had befallen those of Jerusalem. In 586 B.C. the Jews as a nation were

destroyed ; their city was sacked ; its siege of a year and a half ended with the burning of the Temple and all its other buildings. Some eighteen to twenty thousand representatives of the governing classes were taken away to Babylon, and it was only 150 years later that the last of the exiles were allowed to return. It would have been a similar experience for the people of England, if 150 years ago Frederick the Great, let us say, had conquered England, had destroyed the Houses of Parliament, the Abbey and St Paul's, and had taken all the leaders and all the voters of the nation to Prussia and settled them there, and if only now the descendants of such exiles had been allowed to return and rebuild London. But would it not be better for the State Church of England to postpone the authorisation of the singing of this psalm until such a calamity has overtaken us ? If it be retorted that we are not so narrow in our nationalism as not to sing this hymn of wailing and bitter hatred simply because we have never suffered in the same manner, but are prompted to sing it by direct sympathy for the beloved Hebrew people, must not the answer in return be : Do the English people so love the Jews ? Is there any such sympathy ? And, what is more, is not the very admiration which we have for them due to the fact that they, unlike ourselves, in their religion were absolutely loyal to their own past, their own suffering, and out of these constructed for themselves immortal songs of grief and courageous hope ? Can we imagine that the Jews would ever have developed the heroic loyalty to one another which has caused them, at least as a tribe, to survive through centuries of oppression, had they been willing after the Exile to sing in the second Temple hymns as little reminiscent and prophetic of their own life as are the Hebrew psalms of ours ?

Another equally significant change in the use of the Hebrew Psalter will accompany the reduction in the number of times it is to be repeated. Whoever is acquainted with the results of the new scholarship which has been applied to the Book of Psalms, knows that, the moment that scholarship becomes the general heritage of the devout people of England, not the Prayer Book rendering, nor that either of the Authorised or of the Revised Version of the Bible, can be adopted. The chief objection to all three renderings is due to their use of the word "Lord." Now, the factor in experience to which this word is made to point is the eternal burden of the Psalms, and ultimately their ethical value depends greatly on a correct understanding of its meaning. Yet everybody knows that the rendering "Lord" is incorrect; it never pretended to be otherwise. The original, however, was a cause of great embarrassment, and to translate it "Lord" was the best device which could at the time be hit upon. Yet the word "Lord" does not in the least suggest the connotation which the original had in the minds of the composers of the Psalms. To make the situation clear for those who have not followed the newer criticism of the Bible, I cannot do better than to quote Wellhausen's note on the use of the word JHVH, and the note on this note by Professor Haupt, the editor of the Polychrome Bible, attached to the first line of the second verse of Psalm 1, which in the Polychrome Bible reads, "But delights in the Law of JHVH." Wellhausen says :—

It is very doubtful whether the Israelites continued to *pronounce* their special name for God at the time when the composition of Psalms was at its height. Yet we can hardly substitute *God* or *The Lord*, seeing that, in writing, the distinction was maintained between JHVH (Heb. *Yahvêh*), *Elohim*, "God," and *Adonai*, "Lord."

And Haupt adds :—

JHVH represents the *Ineffable Name* of the Supreme Being, erroneously written and pronounced *Jehovah*, which is merely a combination of the consonants of the sacred *tetragrammaton* and of the vowels in the Hebrew word for *Lord*, substituted by the Jews for JHVH, because they shrank from pronouncing the name, owing to an old misconception of the two passages, Ex. xx. 7 and Lev. xxiv. 16. The true pronunciation of JHVH seems to have been *Yahwè* (or *Iahway*, the initial *I=y* as in *Iachimo*). The final *e* should be pronounced like the French *ê*, or the English *e* in *there*, and the first *h* sounded as an aspirate. The accent should be on the final syllable. To give to the name JHVH the vowels of the word for *Lord* (Heb. *Adonai*), and pronounce it *Jehovah*, is about as hybrid a combination as it would be to spell the name *Germany* with the vowels in the name *Portugal*, viz. *Gormuna*. The monstrous combination *Jehovah* is not older than about 1520 A.D. The meaning of JHVH is uncertain.

Without further citing authorities, we may take it for granted, then, that where the words "the Lord" appear in our translations they must be dropped, and that the word *Jehovah*, being so monstrous a hybrid, cannot be allowed in their place. Nor is it possible to think that English literary taste could ever accept the use of JHVH, adopted in the Polychrome translation, and pronounce it *Yahwè*. It would, however, be wholly consonant with general custom, if the word were to be thus pronounced, to spell it so.

Now, this juncture in Biblical scholarship affords the very opportunity which those who accept Matthew Arnold's ethical interpretation of the Old Testament sorely need, and for which some of them have been waiting. Here is a new word for the Hebrew God, *Yahwè*, which no mortal outside of the libraries of

scholars knows anything about ; and it is presented at the very time when a new—an ethical and a naturalistic—interpretation has also been discovered by Biblical scholars to be the correct one for that same deity.

Now, those who believe in worshipping the Power of Righteousness as God are in a predicament, because there is no one name that stands for this conception. It is to this day the Nameless One, the Ineffable. Such words as Duty, Conscience, Righteousness, do not cover it, for the meaning is not Duty, but the Power inherent in Duty ; and so with the other words. We want, then, a name for all human dispositions, deeds and institutions which make for the eternal continuance and welfare of nations. Could not persons feeling the want seize upon this fruit of the new knowledge of the Old Testament, and use it ? They would be giving no offence to traditional sentiment by appropriating the word *Yahwè*, but would be gaining a name for the ineffable element in moral experience.

There is perhaps, from the point of view of national expediency, no fundamental objection to our giving a purely ethical and naturalistic significance to the word Lord ; for while it is not so near to the Hebrew original, it does suggest sovereignty, such as every worshipper of the power of duty counts as descriptive of its claim upon him. But if popular sentiment refused to attach the new interpretation to the old word, let the word *Yahwè* be adopted, for the sake of peace.

Here I have been touching upon a theme which I discussed in a chapter entitled "Theological Terms in a Humanistic Sense," in my volume on *National Idealism and a State Church*. I have done so, because critics have been inclined to misunderstand my position, and, as it seems to me, to depreciate the importance of appropriating the

old terms to the dominant factors in our moral experience. For instance, one of my critics so far misunderstands me as to call me an Agnostic, and to say that with me "it is the Church that is right and the Jehovah that is wrong." Now, there is nothing at least of Spencerian Agnosticism in my position, for I do not believe that the ultimate reality of things is unknowable, but that it is of the nature of mind. Furthermore, my position is that the Church is right because the Jehovah is right; he is essentially the Power of Righteousness. Another of my critics says (in the *International Journal of Ethics*): "He insists so relentlessly on the banishment of supernaturalism and all its works that his retention of the terms of supernaturalism—particularly his somewhat curious anxiety to retain its vocabulary in full—carries with it an unavoidable air of whimsicality." But my plea, I maintain, could appear whimsical only to one who was not driven by the necessity of preaching the power of righteousness as the reality worthy of supreme worship. A preacher, needing words in order to convey a meaning, cannot admit himself whimsical in appropriating terms which he believes always have referred to the same realities as those he indicates, instead of inventing a new language. And so I would here add to the vocabulary of humanistic ethical religion the terms "Lord" and "Yahwè."

If anyone doubts that the psalmists, in proportion as they were truly great and have been of inspiration to the world, did mean the power of righteousness by the four letters JHVH, let him substitute "the Power of Righteousness" in the place of the word now translated "Lord" in the popular English versions of the Psalms. It will be found that some passages thus modified will not possess so immediate and literal a meaning as when

the Lord is interpreted as the personal Creator of the universe. There are psalms which seem to identify God not so much with conscience as with the universal power of nature ; or—to put it otherwise—which identify the universal power of nature with the power of righteousness : for instance, Psalm 19, from the first to the sixth verses. But there is a sense in which the heavens declare the glory of the power of righteousness, and the firmament proclaims its handiwork, even for one who does not predicate of that power anything unverified in experience. Of this thought, however, I have already treated in the chapter on the Creeds ; and most of the psalms do not even remotely hint that the power of righteousness is identical with the power of all nature, in such a way as to compel us to deny the existence of evil or to trace it to the power of goodness.

The substitution of “the Power of Righteousness” for “the Lord” will of course sound harsh, and will tend to destroy the beauty of the poetry, because it will put an end to the personification ; but I am not pleading, let it be remembered, that we should say “the Power of Righteousness” wherever the word Lord appears. I am pleading that we should say the word “Yahwè” or “Lord,” and should continue the personification, using the pronoun “he” wherever it is now used. What I am advocating is, however, that when we *read* Yahwè or Lord, we shall *think* “the Power of Righteousness” ; then I believe that gradually the emotions associated with the thought will attach themselves to the words, and the language of religious experience will be immeasurably enriched. If we, for the moment, substitute for “the Lord” “the Power of Righteousness” in the opening two verses of the first psalm, they will read :—

Blessed is the man that hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners : and hath not sat in the seat of the scornful.

But his delight is in the law of the Power of Righteousness : and in its law will he exercise himself day and night.

And in Psalm 15 how close the logic becomes !—

O Power of Righteousness, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle : or who shall rest upon thy holy hill ?

Even he, that leadeth an uncorrupt life : and doeth the thing which is right, and speaketh the truth from his heart.

He that hath used no deceit in his tongue, nor done evil to his neighbour : and hath not slandered his neighbour,

and so forth. Likewise in Psalm 19, verses 7-8 :—

The law of the Power of Righteousness is an undefiled law, converting the soul : the testimony of the Power of Righteousness is sure, and giveth wisdom unto the simple.

The statutes of the Power of Righteousness are right, and rejoice the heart.

Psalm 23 will begin :—

The Power of Righteousness is my shepherd : therefore can I lack nothing.

Psalm 37, verses 3-5, will be :—

Put thou thy trust in the Power of Righteousness, and be doing good : dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

Delight thou in the Power of Righteousness : and it shall give thee thy heart's desire.

Commit thy way unto the Power of Righteousness, and put thy trust in it : and it shall bring thy way to pass.

The new Biblical scholarship, when it becomes the general possession of the people, will in many ways give an added charm and meaning to the Psalms, besides causing the word Lord to point to the power of righteous-

ness. For instance, when it becomes known that in many of the Psalms the "I" and the "me" refer not to an individual person but to the nation itself, the moral beauty and dignity of the poems from the point of view of national idealism become enormously enhanced. It will be a gain to England when the English people, singing Psalm 51, know that it was not an individual Jew but the nation itself that was speaking in the words, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Whenever Christians have taken the Psalms as voicing the yearnings and experiences of an individual person, they have not only given an interpretation to the original which is not correct, but they have fallen away from that magnificent and inspiring sense of national solidarity which characterised the prophets and poets of ancient Judaism. In the article on the Psalms in the *Encyclopædia Biblica* occurs the passage: "It is often said that the practice of those who prepare hymn-tunes for congregational use is against Smend's view, hymns which were originally the expression of the inward experience of individuals in circumstances more or less peculiar to themselves being adapted to more general use by omissions, additions, and other large or small alterations. The comparison, however, is hazardous, the awakening of individual life in the Western nations since the introduction of Christianity having no parallel in the Semitic East. Those hymns in the Old Testament which were traditionally supposed to be the effusions of individuals . . . turn out to be nothing of the kind, but simply expressions of the faith of the pious community of Israel."

While we must never lose the intense inwardness and individuality of Christian sentiment, we must, I believe, regain the old Jewish sense of national solidarity which caused the psalmists to represent the community itself as

speaking. Those who have sympathised with the identification of religion with national aspiration for which I have been pleading in this book will regret, as an over-individualisation, the extreme moral self-consciousness of each private person, which has led him not only to forget the nation and the State in his religion, but to convert his religion chiefly into an instrument of preparation of himself and others for a life after death.

Despite the defects of the Hebrew Psalms, and the many unlikenesses of temperament and national situation to those of England which they depict, the ethical insight preserved to us in the best of them and their literary merit are such as to justify the retention of most of them for repetition at least once a year. But no one can deny that, were lyrics at hand which embodied equal moral perception, and yet at the same time depicted situations like our own—or, still better, reflected our own history and life—we could have no hesitation in making a place for them in the Church Service. In the fact that such lyrics are at hand is found the second great reason for a reduction of the number of times which the Hebrew hymns should be sung in our churches.

By way of transition from the Hebrew to the strictly Anglican Psalms, it may be well to point out that there exists an intermediate type, both Hebrew and English. Modern Jews are still composing lyrics expressing the old faith of the Hebrew prophets and embodying the eternal passion of the Jew for his race—the passion of censure for its moral defects as the cause of its calamities, and of pride and admiration for its pre-eminent gifts. And some of these modern Hebrew psalmists are Englishmen, speaking the language of Shakespeare, Milton and Burke in a manner worthy of our highest tradition. Now, if we are to retain Hebrew psalms and yet modify the Psalter,

why should we not incorporate some that have been written in England, where the Jew at last has returned to liberty and opportunity such as he has not known since the destruction of the Temple two thousand years ago? Among modern psalms of this type is the poem entitled "Israel," by Mr Zangwill. No one who is familiar with it will dispute the soundness of my estimate of it; nor will anyone do so who can appreciate the terrific yet restrained power of such verses from it as these:—

Hear, O Israel, Jehovah, the Lord our God, is One,
But we, Jehovah His people, are dual and so undone.

Slaves in eternal Egypts, baking their strawless bricks,
At ease in successive Zions, prating their politics;

Faithful friends to our foemen, slaves to a scornful clique,
The only Christians in Europe turning the other cheek;

Wedded 'neath Hebrew awning, buried 'neath Hebrew sod,
Between not a dream of duty, never a glimpse of God;

Tantalus-Proteus of Peoples, security comes from within!
Where is the lion of Judah? Wearing an ass's skin!

Hear, O Israel, Jehovah, the Lord our God, is One,
But we, Jehovah His people, are dual and so undone.

Let it be remembered that, in proposing the introduction of English lyrics into Divine Service, I am not suggesting that the best of the Hebrew poetry should be banished, but am only pleading that side by side with it should be placed the corresponding works of our own greatest writers. The enrichment of our service which would result must be patent to all, the moment specimens are given of the poetry which it is proposed to introduce. Nothing is more beautiful than the nature-hymns to

be found in the Psalms—such as in the 104th and 107th—and these are wholly consistent with a naturalistic view of religion. For although one may hesitate to assert that the universal power of nature is itself a personal spirit of infinite love and wisdom, one can never deny that love and wisdom are the supreme realities—nay, that we have no reason to believe that nature herself exists except in the perception of conscious beings. Some of my critics have imagined that in speaking of the relation of nature to spirit I have denied the transcendence of spirit; but this has been a misinterpretation of my words. Nature, meaning the physical universe, with all the manifold splendours and powers which the Hebrew poets summoned to magnify and glorify the Lord, constitutes not a reality above or outside of spiritual agency as we know it in our own moral personality, but within and subordinate. In asserting such transcendence, however, we must never forget—and those never will who have been schooled in Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*—that Nature, the realm of Time, Space and Causality, is the only sphere upon which or within which spirit can apply her forms and categories, and that therefore spirit as transcendent is empty and void. Her fullness and reality are in her creation of the ordered cosmos. Furthermore, it is in this same realm of Time, Space and Causality that the conscience of man, the dictate of spirit, requires that the ideals of the moral vision shall be actualised. It is further to be borne in mind that physical nature, deriving its very framework from the spirit, is pre-eminently the possession and the instrument of the moral ideal; its chief function is as a theatre for moral actualisation. Therefore Hebrew poetry, in asserting that the heavens declare the glory of God, is perfectly true to the point

of view which has been the presupposition of all the thought in this volume. The very unity of nature is itself a *thought*-necessity, and thus, again, nature is an element subordinate to the moral ideal. In the second place, the laws of nature, besides being the inexorable conditions for the achievement of moral perfection, are, as Emerson taught, of supreme import as illustration and symbol for moral meanings. There is, therefore, nothing supernaturalistic in the Hebrew nature-hymns. Spirit, whose essence is the will to actualise the principles of moral personality, is by right the Lord of nature, and is in actuality its creator. But the creation is within, not beyond itself; and it itself, although transcendent in the sense which I have made clear, nevertheless in its fullness has no existence apart from the realm of Time, Space and Causality.

With this philosophic explanation, to justify, from the point of view of humanism, the retention of those Hebrew psalms which seem to confirm the old-fashioned conceptions of an outside Creator, I would remind the reader of the contrast between the physical nature and the landscape familiar to the ancient Jews, and that known to us as dwellers in the British Islands. Still more significant, however, and justifying the addition of our own nature-hymns to those of the Hebrew psalmists, is our new and wholly characteristic feeling for landscape, to which there is no parallel either in Greek or Hebrew poetry.

As instances of the kind of nature-psalm which we need in our ritual to supplement the existing Psalter, I may be permitted to quote these two following passages from Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey," as they render arguments or attempts to convince the reader superfluous:—

I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth ; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts : a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man :
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods
And mountains ; and of all that we behold
From this green earth ; of all the mighty world
Of eye and ear, both what they half create,
And what perceive ; well pleased to recognise
In nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.

Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her ; 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy : for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk ;
And let the misty mountain winds be free
To blow against thee. . . .

How striking is the contrast of attitude expressed in these lines, to that of the psalmist who could cry :—

Thou art clothed with honour and majesty.
 Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment ;
 Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain :
 Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters ;
 Who maketh the clouds his chariot ;
 Who walketh upon the wings of the wind :
 Who maketh winds his messengers ;
 His ministers a flaming fire.

Both attitudes—the attitude of Wordsworth and that of the writer of this 104th Psalm—are of abiding significance. The modern, the English sentiment cannot supersede, but is needed to supplement, the other.

Another English nature-lyric akin to Wordsworth's, yet adding a spiritual passionateness of its own, is Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind." It depicts a Tuscan and not an English landscape, but as only English eyes could have seen it ; and in it the use of nature as symbol and illustration is made to serve a spirit which only the British rebellion against the anti-revolutionary reaction of France could have engendered. In the "Ode to the West Wind" it is the tortured spirit of the awakening English democracy which cries :—

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is :
 What if my leaves are falling like its own !
 The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep autumnal tone,
 Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, spirit fierce,
 My spirit ! be thou me, impetuous one !

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
 Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth ;
 And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
 Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind !
 Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy ! O Wind,
 If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind ?

This citation from Shelley suggests another lyric of his, which is not in the first instance a nature-hymn, yet is that secondarily. The "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty," rising as it does to the transcendence of Platonic vision, praises the invisible, spiritual, inward standard of all beauty which is the creative cause of the derived loveliness of physical nature :—

Thy light alone, like mist o'er mountains driven,
 Or music by the night-wind sent
 Through strings of some still instrument,
 Or moonlight on a midnight stream,
 Gives grace and truth to life's unquiet dream.

What are these lines but a poetic embodiment of the idea which I have attempted to express above in metaphysical phrase, as to the relation of spirit to the realm of Time, Space and Causality, upon which the spirit not only dictates her laws and forms, but into which she transfuses the radiance of her own being ?

When the Church's leaders begin to do for England a work analogous to that which the post-exilic poets did for the second Temple of Jerusalem, they will also incorporate into our Divine Service some of the stanzas from Shelley's "Adonais," among which they will not fail to include these lines :—

The One remains, the many change and pass ;
 Heaven's light for ever shines, Earth's shadows fly ;
 Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
 Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
 Until Death tramples it to fragments. . . .

As was natural and right in an ethical ritual, the nature-psalms of the Hebrews, although among the finest, were far from being numerous ; and so it would be with selections from English poetry. The dominant note of the Psalms is, of course, the same as that of the Prophets—that the wrong-doings of the people are the ultimate cause of the calamities that befall a nation, and repentance for them is the point from which the return to security, prosperity, peace and joyousness of life and thought must begin. There is a blending, as I pointed out, and as is instanced in Mr Zangwill's "Israel," of passionate rebuke with absolute loyalty and faith. There is so much in English poetry which I might cite in illustration of the same sentiments, and yet with a distinctively English reference and association, that it is difficult for me to restrain myself to the giving of typical instances only. Whatever else may be chosen by the revisers of the Prayer Book, nothing greater or more edifying can be selected than the two following passages from Tennyson's "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington" :—

Thank Him who isled us here, and roughly set
His Britain in blown seas and storming showers,
We have a voice with which to pay the debt
Of boundless love and reverence and regret
To those great men who fought and kept it ours.
And keep it ours, O God, from brute control ;
O Statesmen, guard us—guard the eye, the soul
Of Europe ; keep our noble England whole,
And save the one true seed of freedom sown.

Yea, let all good things await
Him who cares not to be great
But as he saves or serves the State.
Not once or twice in our rough island-story,
The path of duty was the way to glory :

He that walks it, only thirsting
 For the right, and learns to deaden
 Love of self, before his journey closes
 He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting
 Into glossy purples, which outredden
 All voluptuous garden-roses.
 Not once or twice in our fair island-story,
 The path of duty was the way to glory :
 He that, ever following her commands,
 On with toil of heart and knees and hands,
 Thro' the long gorge to the far light has won
 His path upward, and prevail'd,
 Shall find the toppling crags of Duty scaled
 Are close upon the shining table-lands
 To which our God Himself is moon and sun.
 Such was he : his work is done.
 But while the races of mankind endure,
 Let his great example stand
 Colossal, seen of every land,
 And keep the soldier firm, the statesman pure :
 Till in all lands, and through all human story,
 The path of duty be the way to glory.

As an illustration of a type of lyric different from
 the foregoing, and yet altogether Biblical in spirit and
 eminently fitted for chanting in church, is Milton's sublime
 sonnet upon his own blindness :—

When I consider how my light is spent,
 Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
 And that one talent which is death to hide,
 Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
 To serve therewith my Maker, and present
 My true account, lest he, returning, chide ;
 " Doth God exact day-labour, light denied ? "

I fondly ask : but Patience, to prevent
 That murmur, soon replies, " God doth not need
 Either man's work, or his own gifts ; who best
 Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best : his state
 Is kingly ; thousands at his bidding speed,
 And post o'er land and ocean without rest :
 They also serve who only stand and wait."

Before leaving lyrics which are distinctively English as opposed to universal, I wish to cite two sonnets from Wordsworth, and parts of three other poems, which are verily psalms in the sense of the Hebrew Psalter :—

. . . I know not which way I must look
 For comfort, being, as I am, opprest
 To think that now our life is only drest
 For show ; mean handiwork of craftsman, cook,
 Or groom !—We must run glittering like a brook
 In the open sunshine, or we are unblest :
 The wealthiest man among us is the best :
 No grandeur now in nature or in book
 Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,
 This is idolatry ; and these we adore ;
 Plain living and high thinking are no more :
 The homely beauty of the good old cause
 Is gone ; our peace, our fearful innocence,
 And pure religion breathing household laws.

It is not to be thought of, that the Flood
 Of British freedom, which to the open sea
 Of the world's praise from dark antiquity
 Hath flowed, "with pomp of waters, unwithstood,"—
 Roused though it be full often to a mood
 Which spurns the check of salutary bands,—
 That this most famous stream in bogs and sands
 Should perish ; and to evil and to good
 Be lost for ever. In our halls is hung
 Armoury of the invincible knights of old :
 We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
 That Shakespeare spake ; the faith and morals hold
 Which Milton held.—In everything we are sprung
 Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold.

The first of the other three poems, parts of which I wish to cite, is this, from the Preface to William Blake's "Milton":—

And did those feet in ancient time
 Walk upon England's mountains green ?
 And was the holy Lamb of God
 On England's pleasant pastures seen ?

And did the Countenance Divine
 Shine forth upon our clouded hills ?
 And was Jerusalem builded here
 Among these dark Satanic mills ?

Bring me my bow of burning gold,
 Bring me my arrows of desire ;
 Bring me my spear : O clouds, unfold !
 Bring me my chariot of fire !

I will not cease from mental fight,
 Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
 Till we have built Jerusalem
 In England's green and pleasant land.

The second is W. E. Henley's poem in which are found the stanzas :—

What have I done for you,
 England, my England ?
 What is there I would not do,
 England, my own ?
 With your glorious eyes austere,
 As the Lord were walking near,
 Whispering terrible things and dear
 As the Song on your bugles blown,
 England—
 Round the world on your bugles blown !

Ever the faith endures,
 England, my England :—
 "Take and break us : we are yours,
 "England, my own !
 "Life is good, and joy runs high
 "Between English earth and sky :
 "Death is death : but we shall die
 "To the Song on your bugles blown,
 "England—
 "To the stars on your bugles blown !"

And the third is a poem by Mr Edward Carpenter, which in its entirety may never be acceptable, and no part of which possibly will be acceptable to the nation as a whole until the conflicting interests which caused the Boer War have disappeared from the face of the earth, and only the lesson of that tragic event survives. To its survival this poem itself, a typical part of which is the following, will be a contributory influence :—

For now I see thee like a great old tree,
 A Mother of the forest,
 Prone on the ground and hollow to the core, with branches
 spread and stretched about the world.
 And truly these thy seedlings scattered round
 May spring and prosper, and even here and there
 One of thy great arms elbowed in the earth,
 Or severed from the trunk, may live again ;
 But Thou—thy tale of ancient glory is told :
 I fear thou canst but die.

And better so, perhaps ; for what is good shall live.
 The brotherhood of nations and of men
 Comes on apace.

There is no occasion for limiting the canticles, hymns and chants of the Church of England to expressions of self-conscious nationalism. Our national consciousness is to-day in so far at leisure from itself that it may well dwell upon world-wide human duties and ends which it shares in common with all mankind. English poetry is rich with universal human wisdom, which, however, is as yet locked away from the masses of the people, or known to them only vaguely. What a boon it were if every household of every class in the nation might know by heart these lines from Tennyson's "Ancient Sage," through being often reminded of them by the Anglican Temple service !—

Let be thy wail and help thy fellow-men,
 And make thy gold thy vassal, not thy king,
 And fling free alms into the beggar's bowl,
 And send the day into the darkened heart ;
 Nor list for guerdon in the voice of men,
 A dying echo from a falling wall ;
 Nor care—for hunger hath the evil eye—
 To vex the noon with fiery gems, or fold
 Thy presence in the silk of sumptuous looms ;
 Nor roll thy viands on a luscious tongue,
 Nor drown thyself with flies in honeyed wine ;
 Nor thou be rageful, like a handled bee,
 And lose thy life by usage of thy sting ;
 Nor harm an adder thro' the lust for harm,
 Nor make a snail's horn shrink for wantonness ;
 And more—think well ! Do-well will follow thought,
 And in the fatal sequence of this world
 An evil thought may soil thy children's blood ;
 But curb the beast would cast thee in the mire,
 And leave the hot swamp of voluptuousness
 A cloud between the Nameless and thyself,
 And lay thine uphill shoulder to the wheel,
 And climb the Mount of Blessing, whence, if thou
 Look higher, then, perchance, thou mayest—beyond
 A hundred ever-rising mountain-lines,
 And past the range of Night and Shadow—see
 The high-heaven dawn of more than mortal day
 Strike on the Mount of Vision !

The same educational policy which would prompt the incorporation of these magnificent lines in the Church's ritual, would doubtless sanction the use of Matthew Arnold's sonnet entitled "The Divinity," from which I have already quoted the passage beginning "God's wisdom and God's goodness," and the sonnet called "The Better Part," which closes with the lines :—

Was Christ a man like us ? Ah ! let us try
 If we, then, too, can be such men as he !

If it be questioned whether I have not, in proposing

these various modern poems for musical setting, overlooked the problem of their suitability to be sung, I can only answer that probably of them all none, upon first appearance, would seem more difficult than the sonnet by Matthew Arnold to which I have just referred. Yet this sonnet, as pointed by Mr Norman O'Neill, has been sung for years to one of the tunes in the Westminster Chant Book at meetings of the West London Ethical Society; and no one could have heard it and not felt that the singing, under a trained choir-master, brought out, far more finely than mere reading would have done, the variety and depth of meaning in the poem. And each of the poems which I have cited, besides the many others which I have selected but am unable here, from lack of space, to reproduce, has been chosen because of its fitness for singing, as well as because of its meaning and purely literary quality.

Besides lyrics expressing universal human sentiments of a general nature, there is need of others which shall present vividly some one line of duty or some one aspect of character or some one principle or law of the universe in which we live. There are, unfortunately, most essential aspects of virtue, conduct and truth which are almost entirely omitted from the Old and New Testaments, and are not incorporated and made effective in the rituals of the Churches. Take, for instance, the one great duty—so supremely felt in modern times, and so necessary to the prosperity, advancement and self-respect of a nation—of intellectual honesty in facing the fundamental problems of thought and life. The Hebrew psalmists and Christian hymn-writers seem never to have awakened to a sense that one of the supreme religious duties of a rational being is to think for himself and to speak out the truth that is in him. Yet no virtue could be more

English or more loved and lauded by Englishmen. In order that this special aspect of virtue should be incorporated into our Divine Service, the proverbs and aphorisms of those who have been its champions and martyrs should, after the fashion of those who constructed the psalms and proverbs in the Bible, be gathered together. Thus the various parts would reinforce one another. In lieu of anything more fitting, the following words might be sung to serve this end :—

Speak every man truth with his neighbour.
 Speak what you think now, in hard words,
 And to-morrow speak what to-morrow thinks
 In hard words again.
 Wait not to be backed by numbers ;
 Wait not till you are sure of an echo from the crowd.
 The fewer the voices on the side of Truth,
 The more distinct must be your own.
 Truth is a thing to be shouted from the housetops.
 March to the tune of the voice of her,
 Breathing the balm of her breath,
 Loving the light of her skies.
 Blessed is he on whose eyes
 Dawns but her light as he dies ;
 Blessed are ye that make choice of her,
 Equal to life and to death.

Akin in spirit and in tonic effect would prove the following lines from George Eliot :—

Never falter ; no great deed is done
 By falterers who wait for certainty.
 No good is certain but the steadfast mind.
 The undivided will to seek the good—
 'Tis that compels the elements, and wrings
 A human music from th' indifferent air.
 The greatest gift the hero leaves his race
 Is to have been a hero.
 Say we fail,—
 We feed the high tradition of the world,
 And leave our spirit in our children's breasts.

A great and fundamental truth of modern life, the presupposition of all scientific research and the basis of all education, is the uniformity of law throughout nature. Yet this idea is a monopoly, thus far, of a very small minority of the nation—of those who have had the opportunity, or the wisdom to seize the opportunity, of scientific discipline. The masses of the people have no more sense of natural law to-day than they had a thousand years ago. “Unfortunately,” says Dr McDougall, in a paper entitled “A Practicable Eugenic Suggestion,” published in the *Sociological Papers*, “conventional religious teaching and the classical education of our public schools too often conspire to deprive the Englishman of any effective belief in natural causation; so that, except in the simplest cases of physical causation, he is not accustomed to seek, or to believe in the existence of, natural causes. Especially common is this attitude towards all large processes in which hidden causes work through long periods of time; and it is no exaggeration to say that for many, perhaps most, men historical events merely happen, and history is, and should be, the mere chronicle of such happenings.” It is the Church’s duty to incorporate the idea of inexorable causality into its revised Psalter, for it is palpably the function of the Church to educate the people of the nation to the working hypotheses of all discovery and all invention, moral or physical. This uniformity of law is an idea not only for specialists and scholars, but one which all men in a democratic nation must be disciplined to apply. It is the ruling principle which restrains imagination from fatal flights, and yet strengthens and extends its power of wing. Happily, long ago it inspired that great prophet of Anglican nationalism, Richard Hooker, to immortal utterance. The following words from Hooker, express-

ing this presupposition of all science, are as melodious and majestic in language as they are sane, profound and true in thought :—

If Nature should intermit her course, and leave altogether,
though it were but for a while, the observation of her
own laws ;

If those principal and mother elements, whereof all things
in this world are made,

Should lose the qualities which now they have ;

If the frame of that heavenly arch erected over our heads

Should loosen and dissolve itself ;

If celestial spheres should forget their wonted motions,

And by irregular volubility turn themselves any way as it
might happen :

If the prince of the lights of heaven, which now as a giant
doth run his unwearied course,

Should as it were through a languishing faintness begin to
stand and to rest himself ;

If the moon should wander from her beaten way,

The times and seasons of the year blend themselves by
disordered and confused mixture,

The winds breathe out their last gasp,

The clouds yield no rain,

The earth be defeated of heavenly influence,

The fruits of the earth pine away as children at the
withered breasts of their mother, no longer able to
yield them relief ;—

What would become of man himself, whom these things
now do all serve ?

Of Law there can be no less acknowledged

Than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the
harmony of the world ;

All things in heaven and earth do her homage :

The very least as feeling her care,

And the greatest as not exempted from her power ;

Men and creatures of what condition soever,

Though each in different sort and manner,

Yet all with uniform consent,

Admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy.

Another idea which is nowhere adequately suggested

in the Bible or in the present Book of Common Prayer is that of fellowship in the inner life as a source of moral strength ; and yet, according to the principle followed and generally justified by the adaptors and constructors of manuals of religious worship, one could place together great sentences expressive of this principle, which might well be chanted by every congregation in the land. Such a composition, which has already proved its moral efficacy in congregational singing as a chant, is the following :—

Fellowship in the moral life is salvation : Infinite is the help that man can yield to man :

It is our moral nature longing to be fed and strengthened that urges us into fellowship :

Fellowships we need, that will deify Duty, and worship Goodness as a god.

Forsooth, such fellowship is heaven : and lack of fellowship is hell.

Fellowship is life, and lack of fellowship is death :

And the deeds that we do upon the earth—it is for fellowship's sake that we do these deeds.

Oh, what is heaven but the fellowship of minds

That each may stand against the world by its own meek and incorruptible will ?

The tidal wave of deeper souls into our inmost being rolls,
And lifts us unawares out of all meaner cares.

Akin to the foregoing, and yet supplementary, because it more vividly presents the idea of the unity of mankind as a spiritual organism, is the following series of verses, taken chiefly from the Bible :—

Who is weak, and I am not weak : who is offended and I burn not ?

For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.

Whoever degrades another, degrades me ; and whatsoever is done or said, returns at last to me.

I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat : I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink ;

I was a stranger, and ye took me in : naked, and ye clothed me ;

I was sick, and ye visited me : I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

When saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee ; or thirsty, and gave thee drink ? Or when saw we thee sick or in prison, and came unto thee ?

Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

The same heart beats in every human breast.

Someone observing the part played by popular political songs in driving James II. "out of three kingdoms," invented the now current adage, "Let me write a nation's songs, and let who will make its laws." Unhappily, the songs which spring spontaneously into popularity and move the masses to some decision, act only in great crises, and in the moment of intense excitement ; and they are never such as rebuke the populace for their own shortcomings or instruct them in their own duties. Accordingly, the adage which will become the motto of the wise statesman of the future will be, "Let me write a nation's ritual, and let who will make its laws."

CHAPTER X

ENGLISH LITERATURE AND THE LECTIONARY

"THE Divine Service," say Procter and Frere, in their volume entitled *A New History of the Book of Common Prayer*, "mainly exists for the purpose of the orderly recitation of the Psalter and reading of the Bible." Thus it comes about that the Book of Common Prayer, as it were, contains the Bible within itself, and that whoever writes of the one must be continually treating of the other ; in the Prayer Book the Bible is presented from the standpoint of Anglican idealism.

Hence it was necessary that in this volume I should especially dwell upon the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer ; for these—so the Prayer Book presupposes—express the secret of the Old and the spirit of the New Testament ; and in the very pre-eminence given to them we find proof that to the Church, even in its Protestant form, not all parts of the Bible were of equal significance, and that the teacher felt that he must use his own judgment in selecting the elements which he counted vital. It is this same principle, carried further, which has guided my criticism of the Psalter. But hitherto, unfortunately, there has also prevailed another and a conflicting idea ; for, while it has been recognised that the parts of the Bible differ in value, it has at the same time

been maintained that, although all may not be equally precious, nevertheless any part is of greater worth than the best portion of any other literature, except those compositions which have been directly inspired by the Church.

The idea of literary selection which prompted the Church to bring to the forefront the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer led it to choose from the Gospel of Luke the superb canticles known as the Magnificat and the Nunc Dimittis, and assign them a distinguished place in Divine Service. Equally fine in discrimination was the judgment which caused the Te Deum (composed by Niceta, the missionary bishop of Remesiana in Dacia, at the end of the fourth century) and the Apostles', the Nicene and the Athanasian Creeds to be preserved and used regularly by the Church. But the conflicting idea—that everything in the Psalter is worth reading once a month and everything in the Bible once a year—is a notion which cannot be defended from the point of view of the spiritual education of a people. There was more justification for it before the ethical import of Greek literature was appreciated, before modern science had begun to compel Christians to recognise as a virtue the intellectual duty of thinking for oneself and speaking out one's deepest convictions, and before modern nations had produced literatures of their own, which, if not absolutely equal in ethical insight to the Bible, nevertheless, because of their nativeness, have more power as instruments of instruction and inspiration than a remoter literature could have. The uniqueness of the Bible as a divine revelation can no longer be maintained.

For two reasons, then, the Lectionary must be thoroughly overhauled. First, some of the passages appointed to be read as lessons are not worth the time

they take. To justify this criticism by citing instances is beyond my purpose here ; but in any case I may assume that the general public share my judgment. I shall not, therefore, attempt, any more than I did with the Psalms, to suggest which parts should be omitted. Secondly, much material from extra-Biblical literature will be found worthy to replace Bible selections ; and the quantity so chosen will be a chief factor in determining how much of the Bible shall be excised from the Lectionary.

Perhaps I ought in this connection to refer to a problem which will confront the revisers of the Prayer Book, in connection with the quantity of sacred Scripture—whether Hebrew, Greek, Latin, or of modern national origin—which should be comprised within the Lectionary for a year. The Roman Catholic custom of reciting the Psalter once every week was abandoned by the Church of England, because only monks, friars, nuns and secular priests could attend the many daily services of the Church. They, whose profession was religion, had heretofore constituted an adequate number of participants ; but when the monasteries and convents of England were abolished and the laity came into ascendancy, it became patent that a weekly recitation of the Psalter was impossible. The public were too busy with other affairs ; and on this account the number of services each day was reduced to two. But even Morning and Evening Prayer have, as an actual fact, been found too much ; so that the Lectionary, arranged on the basis of daily lessons from the Bible, has not secured the hearing of the whole Bible once every year by even the most devout Church-people.

Many present-day tendencies within the Church itself show that both the recitation of the Psalter and the reading of the Bible must be adapted to the life of the people. If it be true that even devout worshippers are not likely

to attend more than three services a week, it is important that the most edifying and illuminating passages from the Bible should be chosen for reading at these. The public must not be sacrificed to the Bible, but—if it be a sacrifice—the Bible-reading must be curtailed in such a manner that the best parts shall be made accessible to the listening worshippers. On the ground of three services a week, much more than half of the Bible would have to be omitted from an annual Lectionary ; and if the still further principle of incorporating selections from the literatures of other nations were adopted, still more of the Bible would have to be left out, in order to provide space for these ; or if the two lessons from the Bible were to be retained, it would be necessary to omit some other part of the service.

The idea that the Divine Service exists mainly for the purpose of the orderly recitation of the Psalter and reading of the Bible seems to me wholly justifiable in principle from the point of view of national education. Once drop the notion that every part of the Bible is worth introducing into the service, and allow other literatures to compete, and there can be no objection to it—at least in the minds of those who, from acquaintance with the power of literature in influencing the religious life, know that no instrument more potent can form a part of religious ritual.

The British public have been prepared for a saner valuation of the Bible as a whole, and of its parts relatively to one another, by the writings of Matthew Arnold, and chiefly by his famous dictum that the Bible should be read in the same way as other books are read, and judged by the same standards of appreciation. Arnold maintained that the extremest Agnostic, sceptic, or rationalist, approaching the Hebrew literature in this way, would find that it stood comparison with that of any

other nation ; and undoubtedly he was right. Even if regarded only as poetry—merely as legend—the Bible will for ever retain its pre-eminence. No so-called superstition, no crudity of speculative theory, no misinterpretation of historic fact, on the part of its authors, can invalidate its claim to supremacy in literature.

In four particulars it stands the most rigorous tests, and comes out of the ordeal with even greater splendour than before. In the first place, the finest parts of the Bible show a knowledge, on the part of the authors, of the workings of the human heart, they reveal an insight into human nature, which out-Shakespeares Shakespeare. From lack of space, I instance only one specimen—the story of Cain and Abel, in the fourth chapter of Genesis. There, in a compass almost microscopic, is revealed not only the broad earth of our human experience but the overarching heavens of the moral ideal. Whoever wrote the story knew the most hidden secrets of the human heart ; but he also manifested the three other qualities which constitute the marks of all truly great literature. The story of Cain and Abel, in the second place, shows a knowledge of the working of the social mind, of public opinion, of the passions of the crowd. The form in which this knowledge is presented is poetic, and therefore we do not speak of the author of the story as a sociologist ; yet one will find here in a nutshell more sociology—more knowledge of social laws and institutions—than in the works either of Auguste Comte or of Herbert Spencer.

But along with the psychology and the sociology of the story moves with equal strength and cogency the moral judgment of the writer. It is sometimes said by persons with a prejudice against the Bible that the morality at least of the Old Testament is brutal as compared with

that of our day, and that the book therefore is antiquated as a text-book of practical ethics. But as seen in the story of Cain and Abel, and indeed in all its greatest passages, the moral judgment revealed is of abiding value and of universal application. Note, for instance, how modern—nay, how more than up-to-date at the beginning of the twentieth century—is the probing question made to emanate from the mouth of God: “Where is Abel thy brother?” And note, further, when Cain fails to justify his deed, the placing of a moral and social boycott upon him because he had denied the brotherly bond; but forthwith a restriction of the boycott to moral censure, and the condemnation of anyone who might attempt on behalf of the community to assume the rôle of avenger by taking blood for blood.

The fourth characteristic is akin to the third, and yet distinct and of equal significance. There is in this story, and throughout the Bible, not only a sound ethical judgment, but an emphasis placed upon morality which exalts it into the supreme factor in life, setting it up as God, and representing the power of righteousness as constituting the determining element in the destiny of nations.

As an instance of the psychology of the Bible, I would cite first the fact that Cain is represented as slaying his brother in the heat of argument with him, and then the insolent retort of Cain—“I know not: am I my brother’s keeper?”—to the probing question of the social conscience: “Where is Abel thy brother?” Still further, witness the profound insight into the workings of the human heart revealed in the depicting of Cain, who at first was defiant of the social bond, as whining for mercy the moment he finds that he is to be ostracised from the fellowship of men.

As a specimen of the sociology of the Bible, I would

instance the judgment of the writer of this Cain and Abel story in making an economic dispute the cause of the first murder. A class-war, a conflict between two types of industry, an older and a newer, is made the occasion of the tragedy. Cain's insistence that he was not his brother's keeper makes him the founder of the Manchester School of Political Economy. What is the exclamatory assertion "Am I my brother's keeper?" but the whole doctrine of *laissez-faire*—both its spirit and its economic science—in five words? Observe also, as characteristic of Bible ethics, the claim that a man is responsible for another grown-up man, presumably his equal, and the head of a competing industry, and must render account for that other's well-being. The humanitarianism of the nineteenth century boasted that it was full of mercy and care for the feeble and the oppressed; but the Bible begins with the doctrine not of mercy but of social justice—of responsibility not for inferiors but even for equals or superiors.

I have taken one instance only of the psychology, sociology, ethics and religion of the Bible; but this story of Cain and Abel is typical of it, at its best, from Genesis to Revelation. The psychology, sociology, ethics and ethical religion of the Bible constitute the substance of the Jewish and Christian revelation; nor have we outgrown the need of it. Hence it is that, if we go to the Bible as we would to any other book, we are sure to become Bible men—if with a different insight from that of its least critical devotees in the past, nevertheless to an equal degree.

But Matthew Arnold's dictum is not adequate; it suffers from lack of qualification. We ought not in any full sense to go to the Bible as men have been accustomed to going to any other book; for they have

not gone to other books with the right disposition and purpose. They have turned to literature as, according to Francis Bacon, they have "entered into a desire of learning and knowledge" :—

Sometimes upon a natural curiosity and inquisitive appetite ; sometimes to entertain their minds with variety and delight ; sometimes for ornament and reputation ; and sometimes to enable them to victory of wit and contradiction ; and most times for lucre and profession ; and seldom sincerely to give a true account of their gift of reason, to the benefit and use of men : as if there were sought in knowledge a couch whereupon to rest a searching and restless spirit ; or a terrace for a wandering and variable mind to walk up and down with a fair prospect ; or a tower of state for a proud mind to raise itself upon ; or a fort or commanding ground for strife and contention ; or a shop for profit or sale ; and not a rich storehouse for the glory of the Creator and the relief of man's estate.

Were people to accustom themselves to reading the Bible as in general they have read other books, the last state of those people would be worse than the first. What Arnold should have said was that people should read the Bible as they *ought to* read any other book—though in order to cite an example of how they ought to read any other book, probably he would have been compelled to instance the way in which they have hitherto read the Bible ; and then his dictum would have been merely tautological. The Bible is the only book which men have read "to the glory of the Creator and the relief of man's estate" ; and the dictum which people need to-day even more than Matthew Arnold's is that we should go to all other books as devout people have hitherto been accustomed to go only to the Bible. Even the most bigoted fetish-worshipper of the Bible would lose his narrowness were he to make this principle the rule of his study of all

literature. We are not to bring the Old and New Testaments down to the level of other books, but to lift other books to the high plane on which only the Bible has always been placed.

So different from the Bible in superficial qualities is what we call secular literature that one is at first unable to detect that it contains just as profound a divine revelation as the Old and New Testaments, and that its revelation is in fundamental character the same, although in special import it supplements, and does not repeat, that of the Bible. Nobody will deny, for instance, that throughout English history and English life there has been a gradual deepening of insight into the essential nature and requirements of social justice, and that these requirements have, very slowly yet surely, been more and more incorporated into the actual institutions and character of the English people. Yet what was the New Testament but a new insight into social justice, the inwardness of truly spiritual religion, the humility and dignity of man, and the hope of the quick coming of justice through the spiritual co-operation of those who worshipped it as essential deity? And if this constituted it a divine revelation, must not the same qualities gain for English literature also the title of Holy Scripture?

A part of the special divine revelation in English literature and life is revealed in the very sentences which I have just quoted from Francis Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*. The application of science, the mastery over nature by verified knowledge, for the relief of man's estate was a revelation which the world never before had had. It is essentially a modern idea—the greatest idea of modern times—and the source of all other modern ideas. It marks the historic turning of the human mind away from a supernaturalistic towards a naturalistic theology.

Theology of the old kind—such was the truth revealed—must inevitably be barren ; only empirical science could be fruitful ; and that fruit, said Bacon, was forbidden to be used except for the relief of man's estate. Here is a distinctively English divine revelation, yet one of universal value, which has since been gratefully accepted by all the thinking peoples of the world. Is it, then, conceivable that the English people will continue to overlook Bacon's *Advancement of Learning* as a part of Holy Scripture, and for ever refuse to admit into Divine Service, as one of the lessons for the day, the very passage from which I have quoted ?

The existence of the divine revelation in English life and literature is a great and vital fact, requiring a volume in itself ; for it is one that has been almost universally overlooked, though its evidences are abundant.

I have cited but one aspect, but there are at least six or seven distinct lines of new insight into vital truth and duty which have come to the world first and chiefly through "God's Englishmen." I might cite as a part of the world's Holy Scripture, Milton's *Areopagitica*. First to us, in any full sense, was revealed the necessity of liberty as a condition of virtue and virility of character, of happiness and of happiness-producing activity ; and first in this pamphlet of Milton's was treasured up and preserved with immortal power this divine message to the world. I might cite as another equally important portion of the divine revelation, Edmund Burke's *Thoughts on the Present Discontents*, his speeches on American Taxation and on Conciliation with America, his *Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol*, and his *Letter to a Noble Lord*. Here as nowhere else is set forth with imperishable eloquence the moral responsibility of the politician, as opposed to the Machiavellian doctrine of the superiority of the State

to considerations of justice, which had been dominant the world over. Is the Anglican Church to continue to omit passages from Milton and Burke, simply because they do not happen to be found in Isaiah or Paul?

I have not space for the citing of the other messages of divine revelation in English literature ; but I may at least allude to one. That it is pre-eminently an English message was recently brought home to me in reading a book by a famous German writer of devotional works—Pastor Hilty. He had been speaking of various women saints of the Catholic Church, and then went on to declare that there have been in modern times Protestant women of equal strength and beauty of character. Was it an accident that all his instances were Englishwomen — Elizabeth Fry, Florence Nightingale, Catherine and Eva Booth and Miss Hobhouse? It is through English history, in English life and English literature—as witness Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh* and John Stuart Mill's *Subjection of Women*—that respect for the moral personality of woman and recognition of the larger sphere which her spiritual gifts require have first been revealed to the world as essentials of morality and of true religion. Scarcely a hint of this is to be found in the Bible, any more than of salvation to man by the application of science to the relief of his estate, or of the necessity of liberty, or of the application of the principles of ordinary morality to the dealings of States with one another. If we do not find place in the Lectionary of our Divine Service for the expression of these truths as embodied in existing literature, they must be omitted altogether ; for it is not conceivable that any Commission consisting of bishops of the Church, even if some were as gifted as Cranmer himself, could set them forth in a manner comparable to that of such writers as I have mentioned.

But in pleading for an incorporation of passages from English literature into the *Lectio*nary, I would not seem to overlook certain limitations which make the prose and poetry of our nation of itself quite inadequate. In the first place, English history has never yet been written from the point of view from which Hebrew statesmen wrote, adapted and compiled Jewish history. The difference does not consist so much in the absence of any bent or trend or purpose on the part of English historians as in the fact that theirs has not been the distinctively Jewish purpose—which was to trace, as of supreme importance, the growth of social justice and universal morality as a national asset. Many English historians have had no ideal motive at all ; they have been interested in the sensational or dramatic incidents of national life on their own account ; or, like Macaulay, they have stood for the principles and aims of a certain political party. That party was, of course, not without ethical character and did not omit to seek an ethical justification for itself ; but its main purpose was the establishment of a special machinery of politics rather than the spread of universal ethical idealism among the masses of the nation.

Indeed, one may fairly give as the chief objection to historians of the Liberal school that they have talked much of progress, much of the forward movement, but they have omitted to indicate what the goal was, motion towards which constituted progress. To talk of progress without specifying the outlines of the end to be attained is to use a term which persons of diametrically opposed ideals may equally apply to their own peculiar conceptions. Two historians, both using the word “progress,” will be writing conflicting accounts and exercising antagonistic influences if the ideal of the one is, let us say, a benignant aristocracy, and of the other an enlightened social demo-

cracy. Naturally, as I have been advocating a development of the nation towards social democracy and the spread of scientific habits of mind, I can but feel that the great need of the hour is the re-examination of all the materials furnished by the national records for a thousand years, and a selection of all tendencies and events, on the principle that their importance is in proportion as they make for social democracy, freedom of thought, and a knowledge of the laws of man and the universe.

In the absence of English history thus written, the Bible has an added claim upon us. And, besides, it may be said that there is one special reason which will for ever give the Old and New Testaments a just precedence over modern literature—a reason in addition to the fact that they have already for a thousand years exercised a formative influence upon the idealism of every nation of the West. But in order to explain this reason, I must first lay down in briefest outline some of the chief effects which I conceive that the Church, through her Divine Service, ought to produce upon the minds of the whole public. After having specified these effects, it will, I believe, be easy for me to show that they can best be accomplished by a national familiarity with the Bible from a freely critical, scientific and historical, as well as ethical, point of view.

One of the chief ends to be achieved by church services is that they shall create in the minds of all adults a dominating sense of the universal validity, inexorableness and reality of the law of cause and effect. It is nationally expedient that the people of a democracy should realise vividly that no event, mental or physical, happens except as the resultant of the sum-total, mental and physical, of the ordered cosmos ; they must know that in every particular the present is the child of the past and the parent of the future ; that nothing happens which is not due to

precedent events, and that because we cannot trace any given event to its "secondary causes" is no ground for thinking that it was not due to such causes.

A second desideratum is that all the men and women of our country shall be so cultivated intellectually as never to regard the events of physical nature as signs or portents, or as fraught with occult psychic influences or with hints and messages to guide men in the carrying out of human desires. They must feel no possible interest of an astrological as distinct from an astronomical nature, or of an alchemistic as opposed to a chemical, or of a spiritistic or psychical-research order as opposed to the most rigorously scientific psychology.

Thirdly, it is necessary that the people of England under the discipline of the Church shall abandon all belief in the significance of dreams. They must not think—as many of them do to this day—that dreams may furnish clues to one's spiritual destiny or contain revelations of an unseen world, and therefore should be respected and followed in preference to the perceptions and thoughts of waking life ; but they must be trained to count the mental phenomena of sleep as by-products of general psychic and physical conditions, and as having no meaning except as symptoms of these.

A fourth end which should dominate the choice of readings for the edification of the people when the Lectionary is revised, is that the people shall come to perceive the organic spiritual unity of human beings in society, and shall learn to count all inward, spiritual experiences—aspirations, enthusiasms and regrets—as being reactions of the soul of each against the influences which stream in upon him—often at the moment altogether unperceived—from the corporate life and thought of society.

Fifthly, accompanying such effects of the Lectionary should be the production of a desire in the heart of the people to make the service of the spiritual organism of society the chief end of existence, and an imperative sense of the responsibility of following those lines of conduct and training those dispositions of the will which contribute to the efficiency, health and perpetuity of families, cities and States, in so far as these embody the principles of organic life.

And, sixthly, it is of the first importance to every nation, as I have sought to show in many connections, that the people should accept as the essence of true religion reverence for the ideal of a perfected humanity and devotion to the cause of its universal realisation upon earth.

My own experience has shown me that the higher criticism of the Old and New Testaments, as embodied, let us say, in the method, spirit and results given in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, constitutes the finest conceivable discipline in concrete reasoning, in using the moral judgment, in cultivating a sense of literary proportion, in realising the sublime human purpose in history, in respecting and loving high types of character, in fostering a spirit of self-sacrifice to the cause of social justice and of human health and happiness, of mastery over nature and of devotion to ideals.

It is quite possible that, in the past, Bible-reading has been the chief means by which effects the very opposite of the first four I have specified have been achieved. The Bible has been used to teach that the order of nature might be continually interrupted by events due to no precedent finite happening; that physical occurrences might be signs and portents, warnings and hints; that dreams, at least in the past, have often been sent from some transcendent sphere as revelations or forebodings of

danger or as prophecies of success to mortals ; and that one's deepest moral perceptions and aspirations emanate not from within the spiritual organism of society, but from beyond it and uncaused by it. It may seem paradoxical to assert that the book which has best served to produce these unscientific and anti-social effects is also the very book which can best produce the directly opposite ones. Yet upon second thought it will be found that, if in the hands of a teacher who believed in the occurrence of events not naturally caused, the Bible was efficacious in producing such beliefs, it will be equally so in the contrary direction, when the teacher's object is to instil a belief in the universality of the law of cause and effect. For the Bible furnishes in its stories the very material, by reasoning critically about which men have been led to reject miracles altogether. Now, the scientific habit of thinking will not be developed throughout the nation, if all reference to miracles and the history of so-called supernatural events is barred out from systematic examination ; indeed, to hear nothing of pre-scientific views of life is not the way to become fortified against them. On the contrary, it is necessary early to become acquainted, and to grow year by year more intimately familiar, with them. I will not say, as many do, that it is necessary in early childhood to believe them ; but it would certainly do no harm if at the beginning they were believed, provided the clergy constantly encouraged the free critical, scientific and ethical examination of them.

I have only space to give briefest mention to the ethical and religious advantages of reading the Bible in church, when, concurrently, it is expounded in the pulpit and in Bible-classes from the new point of view. Religious instruction should always reveal not only the inner moral sanctions—the satisfaction of doing right and

the love of right for its own sake and for the sake of humanity—but side by side with these highest motives, and always interpenetrating them, should be presented politics, history, biography and literature, in order that the people shall never fall into the error of imagining that the judgment of right and wrong, and the desire to do right and eschew evil, are activities that spring into the mind full-grown from some transcendent source or from some inmost centre of the isolated individual. They must be continually reminded that morality has been a slow social growth, due to struggle and experience in families, cities and States. Now, the Bible, more than any other national literature, presents the growth of social justice through the long centuries of a nation's struggles, and the evolution through experience of human insight into the requirements of social justice.

When English history is written from this Bible point of view, it may deserve to supersede the Bible, if as well done ; but even then it could not be of equal value with the higher criticism of the Old and New Testaments as a discipline in concrete reasoning and as a warning against belief in dreams and occultism.

No historian denies that one of the greatest religious and intellectual events in the history of England occurred when an excellent translation of the Bible into the vernacular was made accessible to the nation at large. But it may be safe to prophesy that it will be a still greater event of the same order when the preachers of England see fit to disclose to the people the method, spirit and purpose of the higher criticism of the Old and New Testaments. The mere translation of the Bible did not introduce a new method of finding truth ; and, unhappily, the old one which was then in vogue, as all true thinkers and scholars now see, obscured instead of reveal-

ing the real nature of the Bible. The higher criticism of our day, however, employs a method which is acknowledged in every other department of experience to put an end to mere fancies and prejudices, to narrowness and to whims, and to expose the truth as it is in itself, or rather as it must be discerned by the common reason of man. It is fair to say that the higher criticism is now, after two thousand years, for the first time revealing to man the purport and the secret of the energising power of the Old and New Testaments. Nor ought this to seem a strange and remarkable thing; for the same method has already revealed to us the qualities, chemical and physical, of matter, the motions of stars and planets, the processes of plant and animal growth, and the steps of the evolution by which the crust of the earth has been formed; and it is reconstructing for us whole epochs of history and types of ancient civilisation, and bringing to view the laws both of society and of the individual mind. Now, it was one thing that the Bible should be read and misunderstood; it is another thing that it should be read to a public trained to discriminate between its enduring elements and the survivals in it of human error. It cannot be said that to hear frequently the ancient records even of the superstitions and sins of bygone ages is without its disciplinary value as a warning; for it will be as difficult to keep as it was to attain the heights of humane science. Nor does the well-disciplined mind require of literature that nothing shall be embodied in it but what we in our day, true to our conceptions, would express; one test of mental training being that each utterance is judged relatively to the civilisation and epoch which produced it, and is placed on a par with the corresponding products and functions of other ages. It ought, then, to be borne in mind that to bring the higher criticism

to the people is at last—and for the first time—to bring the Bible to them.

I have spoken thus far as if English literature did not include the English translation of the Bible which constitutes the Lectionary ; but of course, to speak strictly, that translation is a large and has been a formative factor in English literature itself. And it scarcely can be said now, after three centuries, that the English Bible belongs to foreign literature. Indeed, instead of wishing to place it outside of the sphere of English literature, I would plead rather that the revisers of the Lectionary should educate public opinion to such a degree of catholicity as to make it possible for them, when proposing innovations, to incorporate in the Lectionary equally well translated selections from Plato, Thucydides and Plutarch, from Goethe and Dante.

But this subject belongs not so much to the question of a Lectionary as to that of the compilation of a universal Holy Scripture. Towards such a work, the leading religious and educational authorities of all the nations of the world must co-operate. There can be little doubt, however, that they will select such works as the *Apology*, *Crito* and *Phædo*, together with parts of the *Republic* ; the *Pericles' Funeral Oration* and the *Delay of the Deity in Punishing the Wicked*, as well as the parts of the Bible which experience has proved to be most edifying. Oriental scholars will choose whatever portions of the Eastern scriptures are in their judgment worthy of incorporation. When such a universal Holy Scripture has been compiled, the work of constructing a Lectionary of superb beauty and irresistible cogency will present no insuperable difficulties.

Returning to English literature proper, let me add only two comments. After having for twenty years

studied it with special reference to the suitability of passages for a national Lectionary, I feel that the resources of our prose and verse, instead of being exhausted by the successive selections one may make, disclose ever new veins of wealth ; for the insight of the reader only gradually becomes trained to discriminate the parts most fraught with edifying power in the way in which the tradition of centuries has made it easy for us to judge of the Bible.

But, notwithstanding the opening up of the sacred treasure of English literature, the feeling has grown upon me that England has as yet brought forth, out of her sufferings and hopes, only her Old Testament, so to speak. The Gospels' consciousness of fresh spiritual power, of moral energy, of being in the centre of great happenings which are worthy to be proclaimed with joy, is scarcely to be found as yet in native expressions of English experience. This is only to be accounted for by the fact that thus far the great masses of the people of England are still disinherited—shut out from participation in the liberty, the wealth, the leisure, the control and the security of the ruling classes. Let women and the working people be admitted to the national inheritance, let children be secure of food and sunshine and the aged of home comfort, and English literature will begin to thrill with the fresh joy of spiritual life, and, by expressing it, augment it and quicken its development. Perhaps it might be well, therefore, as the New Testament of England is not yet written, not to think at present of completing, with any sort of fixity, an elaborated Lectionary, or any other part of Divine Service, but to count all work of revision for several generations as at best tentative ; that the genius of the new democracy may remember that the nation waits for it to say that which most deserves utterance, and which must be lived before it can be spoken.

CHAPTER XI

BAPTISM : SIGN OF INITIATION : RECOGNITION OF CHILDREN

THE ulterior end of every religious rite is plainly disclosed in the opening rubric of the service for the public baptism of infants. There it is declared to be most fitting that baptism should not be administered except upon Sundays and other holy days, *because the greatest number of persons are then present and can testify that the child was baptised ; in the second place, they will be put in remembrance of their own profession made to God in their baptism.* This rubric also declares that it is expedient that baptism be ministered in the vulgar tongue. Such a declaration plainly discloses that the persons formulating the rubric were aware that a Church rite is a means towards a social end, and that the end is the commitment of individuals to the Church, or to some other human relationship or office approved by it. Were it not for this end, the rite might as well be performed in Latin as in the vulgar tongue, and when few were present as when many.

From the point of view of the purpose which ritual serves, the democratic superiority of the Protestant Churches to Roman Catholicism, through their having adopted the current speech of each nation, is evident. However much the Roman Catholic laity may be in-

structed in the meaning of the Latin service, it is psychologically impossible that their attention could be fully concentrated upon the meaning of the ritual when given in a dead language. The retention of the Latin tongue furnishes proof of the spiritual monopoly and supremacy of the Roman Catholic clergy.

Baptism is the established rite for the admission of new members into the Church; it outwardly symbolises spiritual initiation into the organisation. This is clearly stated in the service itself. Immediately after the dipping or the pouring of water and the utterance of the baptismal formula, the priest says: "*We receive this child into the congregation of Christ's flock*, and do sign him with the sign of the Cross, in token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner, against sin, the world, and the devil; and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end. Amen." Then the priest exhorts: "Seeing now, dearly beloved brethren, that this child is regenerate, and *grafted into the body of Christ's Church*, let us give thanks unto Almighty God for these benefits; and with one accord make our prayers unto him, that this child may lead the rest of his life according to this beginning."

A rite, being only a sign, can have no meaning to one who does not know the thing signified. And in proportion as one keeps the signification precisely in mind, one will be able not only to understand the rite, but to criticise it and, if need be, to revise it.

There is so little understanding of the psychology and the social economy of ritual in general, that baptism naturally comes in for its full share of misconception and depreciation. One who does not perceive the necessity for any formalities at all cannot be expected to

value this special one. Yet to one who has followed sympathetically my contention elsewhere, that in religion the thing signified does not exist without the sign, it will not be difficult to show that no person can be engrafted spiritually into the body of Christ's Church unless he submits to the sign which by general consent has been adopted to signify admission. The sign and the thing signified are, here as everywhere else, interdependent for their existence.

No one can deny that the spiritual receiving of new members into its fellowship is essential to the continued life of the Church ; we are, then, forced to conclude that a sign of admission is equally indispensable. If there should cease to be a rite of initiation, there would cease to be any new membership. In this respect, however, the Church is not peculiar. To any society whatever, new members are necessary to replace those who die or resign, and their admission must be marked by some sort of formality. Common sense, therefore, and the very nature of the case, have brought it about that all societies, whatever their object, do resort to some initiatory device. They must exact at least an expression in writing or by word of mouth that the person sympathises with the aims of the organisation and desires to be a member. In addition to these forms, they often require the payment of a subscription more as a proof of the applicant's *bona fides* than for financial aid. Such requirements are formalities, but they cannot be called merely formal, as some sign or other is indispensable. How else could a society distinguish its members from the world at large ? And if it could not distinguish its members, it all comes to the same thing as if it had none. In short, only through the sign does spiritual admission to an organisation become a positive fact of social experience and a

factor capable of being traded upon by the society. In many points of policy the Founder of the Christian Church (or, if not he, the men who attributed the wisdom to him) is shown to have been a consummate statesman ; and not least in this, that he regarded neither the mere spirit nor even the particular good works of the spirit in any man as sufficient. Morality was not enough ; loyalty in the soul was not enough ; secret service was not enough. He insisted that, besides all such general evidences of discipleship, everyone must submit to a special sign, arbitrarily chosen and generally agreed upon, to signify admission to membership of his society.

The baptismal service cites the saying of Jesus that none can enter the Kingdom except he be born anew both of water and of the Holy Ghost, water being the substance of the arbitrary symbol chosen. Reduced to general terms, this saying means that, besides a disposition within the man's soul, a special outward sign must be made, else the man cannot enter the kingdom of God.

Many persons accustomed to think for themselves in matters of religion have mocked at the idea that baptism should be counted essential to Christian salvation. They think it preposterous that a man cannot inherit the benefits of any organisation without going through a set form. But such critics, although they may have thought freely, have not thought fully ; and perhaps there is a certain excuse for their confusion ; for without doubt, if salvation is made to refer to a life after death, the idea that baptism is essential to secure it is morally groundless. No mortal can see any natural connection between baptism and the saving of one's soul from eternal torment after death. And if such an effect be called a spiritual mystery, still one's reason and judgment are not satisfied ; conscience refuses to be hoodwinked by any such interpretation ; it

declines to accept moral mysteries. But if we understand salvation to mean something immediate and something social in its causes and effects, Christ's making entrance to the kingdom of God dependent upon baptism was perfectly justifiable. He then meant that if a person would not submit to the outward sign of admission he could not be admitted to the new organisation ; if he was not admitted outwardly he could not participate in the work ; and if he did not participate in the work he could not partake of its blessings.

In the case of all other societies no one doubts such a causal connection. One who refuses to submit to the act of initiation cannot partake of their life, know their secrets or help to carry out their plans ; and, being excluded from their counsels and meetings, one cannot get near enough to the life of the movement to catch the fire of its enthusiasm. The German Social Democrats, quite rightly and with powerful effect, brand everyone who professes Socialism but refuses openly to join the party as worse than an enemy. A secret friend, they say, is a moral abomination ; they insist that the sign and the spirit are equally necessary. Such natural necessity justifies the ordinance of baptism, and is fully recognised in the rite itself ; it is given there as the cause for the establishment of the rite, and therefore as the full explanation of its potency.

Thus, there is nothing mysterious in the efficacy of baptism. In every organisation its chosen sign of admission has exactly analogous effects. Moreover, it is evident that the New Testament writers were fully aware that there was no occult power in baptism and no hidden and incomprehensible motive for the insistence upon it ; for it is told that Nicodemus came secretly, and Jesus refused to recognise him. It was to Nicodemus that Jesus

declared that a man must be born of water as well as of the spirit—meaning that he must openly declare himself, as well as be in sympathy and help secretly.

In order to impress the essential meaning and character of this rite upon one's mind, it would be well to habituate oneself not to call it baptism, after the arbitrary element of the ceremonial act, but to name it initiation into the Church, so as to suggest the function which the sign performs.

My argument thus far proves only that some outward sign of initiation into the Church is necessary ; it does not prove that baptism is the only possible one. And there can be no such proof. It would have been easy for Christ to adopt some other symbol ; and this, having once been established, would have produced all the essential effects required. Yet there can be no doubt that one sign may be much more appropriate than another. In choosing what special one should be adopted, the wise statesman would naturally consider the peculiar character of the society in question. He would choose from among a number the sign which would serve his purpose best. Spiritual entrance into any movement must suggest by poetic analogy some one action on the physical plane of life which would symbolise it more fittingly than others. Now, the mental side of becoming a member of a church is this : a man has begun to feel deeply the distinction between a life of mere self-interest, conventionality, prudent conformity, worldly gain, appetite, impulsiveness, and pleasure-seeking on the one hand, and on the other a life boldly devoted to the common weal and to ideals of art, science and all-round perfection ; and he now chooses the latter as the worthier and indeed as the only real and satisfying life. He accordingly, as a necessity for himself and for the carrying out of his purpose, seeks the active

co-operation and fellowship of others in devotion to the same ends. In entering into union with them a new life begins for him. The conventional life, we note, is one widely prevalent among men and deeply rooted in custom ; while the inward life is comparatively rare. The old is effortless and anarchic ; the new strenuous and moving to a far-off goal. The old engenders social disease, poverty, despair, madness, hatred, war and hypocrisies ; the new tends to create a world of health, abundance, insight, love and gladness. The habits and compensations of the old are now to be abandoned as if they had been a pollution. The change from self-seeking to fellowship in social service is analogous in many particulars to purification of the human body by washing. It is a transition from uncleanness to cleanness. John the Baptist caught up this poetic analogy between physical ablution and mental purification, which had already been incorporated into the Judaic ritual, and transferred it from the sphere of non-ethical to that of moral cleanness. Then Jesus, or some statesman of the first century, rendered the rite still more ethical and far more poetic by adopting it as the sign of admission to the Church, as if entrance into its fellowship was to do for the minds of its members what a going down into the running water of a river would do for their bodies.

The question now before us is whether the symbol thus chosen was the best that could be found. If we set aside all prejudice and bias, we shall be struck by its appropriateness ; it is probable that the metaphor of washing away sins will live as long as there is cause for using the words "clean" and "unclean" to apply to moral states. And so long as this metaphor suggests itself to the mind, so long will baptism serve to symbolise initiation into the Church.

If we consider this symbol in the light of the principles

of democracy and naturalism which I have been advocating, we shall see that its appropriateness is in no wise diminished by the transformation that is gradually taking place within the Church. The reasons which, two thousand years ago, led the organisers of the Church to adopt this special symbol had nothing to do with the question whether religious trust was to be placed only in personal agents who were living members of society or also in personal agencies beyond man and nature. Indeed, the appropriateness of baptism, instead of being lessened, is enhanced, now that we see the only sources of moral cleansing to be within human society itself ; purification, if it is to take place at all, must issue from a new social environment. Pollution is due only to the society into which one is born and from the midst of which one was conceived. When the Church no longer presumes to be anything but an organised fellowship for the realisation by natural means of human ideals on earth, there will no longer be any liability that the rite of baptism will be interpreted as possessing magical or occult potency. What happens to the soul of the novice will be clearly seen to be no transcendent mystery ; yet the sign will be more potent than ever ; without submitting to it no one will expect to be quickened into new life. But its efficacy will be seen to be the most natural thing in the world, and the notion of attributing it to superhuman agencies will be regarded as a superstition. The novice, when he enters the Church, simply enters a new moral environment. In contrast with the society of the world at large, Church fellowship is to his spiritual nature what to a man's body is the water of a river which he goes down into, as contrasted with the air that had hitherto surrounded him. Such being the analogy, the Church, even if it had never before adopted baptism as the symbol

of admission, would be led to do so now on grounds of policy.

Thus far I have spoken as if by baptism immersion were always meant ; for by universal consent that is the ideal form ; both æsthetically and politically, sprinkling is a degenerate ceremony. The whole philosophy of ritual requires that, if purification by washing is to suggest the form, the rite must consist of an actual washing ; the body of the novice must be made positively cleaner for submission to it. How else could the sign symbolise the removal of impurities from the moral nature ? Therefore there should be immersion, or no baptism at all. A wholly different sign would be better than a meagre relic that retains no vestige of the essential act, but only the accidents. Such a remnant of a relic in ritual is grotesque. If entrance into the Church achieves no greater purification of the soul than the increase of cleanliness effected upon the body by sprinkling, sprinkling of course is an appropriate form ; but such a ground for defending it can be offered only by one who means to mock at the Church's ceremonies. Immersion, on the contrary, is an actual bath ; and a bath is what the realism of ritual demands.

When we consider the present main tendencies of religion—towards belief in ritual, on the one hand, and, on the other, towards the principle of the spiritual autonomy of society—we are led to anticipate that there will be a gradual return to complete dipping in the water, and that the rite will never again dwindle to a mere hint of itself. Indeed, it is probable that it never would have so dwindled in the past had not the notion that the water possessed magical effects for the soul caused the devout to mix metaphors. They began to believe that the water itself by divine influence became medicinal ; and under

the idea not of washing but of medicine the rite was transformed. A few drops of magical water prescribed by an infinite physician would be enough to cure any patient ! But the Church as she becomes more clearly naturalistic will drop this confusion of imagery, and retain exclusively the metaphor of washing.

We have seen that immersion in water happily symbolises the transition from self-seeking to a fellowship of social service. But in order to make clear that the essence of the virtue of baptism has nothing to do with the substance of the element concerned, and that there is no question as to whether water was sanctified in some mysterious way, let me point out that, were there in existence a society of propagandists of self-seeking who wished to initiate the altruistic into an organisation for selfishness, they also would find immersion an equally perfect symbol of their meaning. There is no vital connection between the purification of the body by means of water and the new life of disinterested service of others. The advocates of selfishness would naturally call selfishness purity and unselfishness a pollution. They therefore would not need to change the outward act of initiation ; only the verbal formularies of the Christian Church would require to be modified. In a similar manner, it would be possible for a nation to adopt immersion as the sign for the naturalisation of foreign-born persons ; but then, in place of the Church formularies, the bodily act would need to be accompanied by the oath of allegiance required of applicants for naturalisation. In this case the new meaning would not be a direct inversion of the old, but the ritual would have been shifted from the sphere of religious to that of political affiliation.

Such total changes of signification being possible through the mere introduction of new words into a rite,

it is *a fortiori* to be concluded that the Church might adopt the minor change of ceasing to regard religious conversion as wrought by a superhuman agency and yet retain immersion as indicating the transition from self-seeking to the fellowship of social service. Yet in this case also, while every item in the rite except the words might be kept unmodified, the new meaning would require revision of the verbal formularies. We shall have no doubt on this score if we examine carefully the text of the baptismal rite. Little offence will be found in the opening exhortation by the priest, which reads :—

Dearly beloved, forasmuch as all men are conceived and born in sin ; and that our Saviour Christ saith, None can enter into the kingdom of God, except he be regenerate and born anew of Water and of the Holy Ghost ; I beseech you to call upon God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that of his bounteous mercy he will grant to *this Child* that thing which by nature *he* cannot have ; that *he* may be baptised with Water and the Holy Ghost, and received into Christ's holy Church, and be made *a lively member* of the same.

Bearing in mind the naturalistic signification of the word "sin," we cannot deny that all men are conceived and born in it. Admitting, further (what we have just seen), that a sign of initiation into the Church is necessary, we cannot deny the statement that a man cannot enter into the kingdom of God except he be born of water as well as of the Holy Ghost, water once having been chosen as the symbol. Further, it is true that righteousness of life is a thing that comes by conscious self-determination ; it is a matter of principle and of rational decision rather than of spontaneous and unreflective impulse. If we bear in mind the distinction often made between nature and art, we shall admit that righteousness is a matter not of nature

but of art ; it is designed by the purpose of man ; it is, so to speak, artificial as contrasted with natural ; it is a result of effort and is born of ideational energies rather than of any mechanical tendency which of itself would have brought it into existence. It is clear, then, that what the Church morally seeks for every child is a thing which by nature he does not originally have ; he has it by the intelligent will of his fellow-men and himself. And this is clearly the element of truth and fact underlying the words in the latter half of the opening exhortation. So that on the whole, although the phraseology is antiquated, the substance of the thought here is sound.

When we come, however, to the first prayer of the Baptismal Service, we find ourselves face to face with an astonishing literary production. It reads as follows :—

Almighty and Everlasting God, who of thy great mercy didst save Noah and his family in the ark from perishing by water ; and also didst safely lead the children of Israel thy people through the Red Sea, figuring thereby thy holy Baptism ; and by the Baptism of thy well-beloved Son Jesus Christ, in the river Jordan, didst sanctify Water to the mystical washing away of sin ; We beseech thee, for thine infinite mercies, that thou wilt mercifully look upon *this Child* ; wash *him* and sanctify *him* with the Holy Ghost ; that *he*, being delivered from thy wrath, may be received into the ark of Christ's Church : and being steadfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity, may so pass the waves of this troublesome world, that finally *he* may come to the land of everlasting life, there to reign with thee world without end ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The only part of this whole prayer which can survive the tests of literary, ethical and ecclesiastical insight is the participial phrase "being steadfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity." These prepositions,

adjectives and nouns are the only words in the whole gigantic sentence which fit with anything like closeness the essential principle of the Church. The metaphor of water which is forced through all the windings of the tortuous sentence loses wholly the natural course of poetic speech.

Let no one be disposed to condone the peculiarities of this document on the ground that it is old and that it is only quaint with years ; for after all it is not so old. In this form it is the result of very hasty composition, adaptation and re-adaptation in the time of the Protestant Reformation. But even were it a thousand years of age, its peculiarity could not be traced to its antiquity, for its literary absurdities are of a kind that have no reference to age and are not due to changes of literary taste. Logic was always logic, and from the time of the ancient prophets and of Homer poetic speech has been subject to the canons of universal thinking. Nowhere in the acknowledged great literature of three thousand years is there to be found any such preposterous metaphor. The analogy between baptism and what happened to Noah and to the children of Israel is unthinkable—as any schoolboy would detect if he were not forbidden to examine and criticise ecclesiastical compositions.

Even if we assume that the Flood and the passage through the Red Sea were actual occurrences, the inaptness of the reference is not diminished. Noah and his family and the children of Israel were saved from water, not by water. What the water did was not to save but to destroy. How then can these assumed events prefigure baptism ? If it be said that the water destroyed the wicked and that in baptism it saves the good, and that therefore in both cases water is the substance unto salvation, the metaphor becomes the more impossible, for

then the good person baptised is made analogous to the wicked person destroyed. And indeed throughout the latter clauses of the prayer there is a distinct carrying out of the analogy as between the baptised person and the wicked ; for the petition is uttered that he may reach the ark, may pass the waves of this troublesome world, and may come to land. The notion at the root of this confusion of thought is probably that the substance of the water itself is spiritually remedial. Yet, even starting from this point of view, it ought to have been seen that in the case of Noah the remedial substance was wood. It was the ark that saved Noah as the water saves the novice of the Church. And what saved the children of Israel was the dry land, which in that case therefore was the sanctified substance. Yet what logic is there underneath the analogy, if we say : Noah was saved by wood, the children of Israel by dry land, the Christians by water ; therefore, the sanctifying power of water is prefigured in the experiences of Noah and of the chosen people ?

If it be said that to criticise thus the merely literary infelicities of this prayer is altogether to lower my argument, I answer that these infelicities are not merely literary and are not accidental. The cause of them is that same trust in supernatural agencies which is the source of all the other evils into which religion has fallen. Had not the narratives of the Bible been believed to emanate from an intelligence superhuman and supernatural, men otherwise of at least average abilities would have used their wits aright. They would not have been tempted to seek prefigurements of baptism, but would have justified it by the perfectly patent reasons for it in Church polity. Had they sought historical precedents, they would not have mistaken for such what were evidently nothing of the sort. But it was impiety to pry too closely into the limitations

of Bible meanings, and it had become a habit to seek and crave for the mysterious and the inexplicable. The mentally paralysing effect of trust in supernatural agents is illustrated in its causing Church authorities to mix metaphors in order to make it seem that the Creator of the world ages before had foreshadowed a ceremonial of the Church.

But even were there no literary defects in this opening prayer, the references to Noah and to the Red Sea incident would need to be omitted ; and all lovers of the Church will work to that end. Are there any narratives in the whole of ancient literature more discredited than these stories of the Flood and the passing through the Red Sea ? Instead, therefore, of being a support and of adding dignity and solemnity to the baptismal rite, these references make the ceremony seem foolish in the eyes of all except the illiterate and the fanatical. If reasons are to be given to explain or enhance the dignity of the rite of baptism, they must be the real reasons ; and if historical precedents are to be offered in order to add the authority of custom, they could have been found in the general practice of baptism among the Jews, in its adaptation by John the Baptist, and again by the Church statesmen of the first century.

The rite of initiation as practised by the Church awakens controversy not only in regard to the relative fitness of sprinkling and immersion, but also in regard to the comparative merits of infant and adult admission. It becomes quite clear upon reflection that infant baptism is not consonant with the individuality and liberty which must be recognised in a social-democratic religion. What we see in the difference of custom as regards infants between the Baptist denomination and the Church of England is an illustration of the difference, which I have

pointed out in another volume, between the Church and the sects as regards socialism. The sects are democratic but individualistic ; the Church is socialistic but despotic. So that from a social-democratic point of view we find ourselves able to side neither with infant baptism as practised by the Church nor with adult baptism as practised by the Baptists. The Baptists have no form of welcoming children and dedicating them to the new life ; the Church constrains the adult to fulfil promises which had been made on his behalf before he could intelligently judge for himself. The Church is socialistic to an extreme which obliterates the individuality and personal responsibility of each human being ; the Baptist denomination fails to regulate into a systematic discipline from the child's earliest years those influences which need to be organised to its advantage. Further, if we look closely into the situation, we shall be compelled to say that, if baptism is to be the sign of engraftment into Christ's Church, it never should be practised upon a person of immature judgment.

The truth is that, if one carefully studies the baptismal formulæ, the Catechism and the rite of Confirmation, one receives a distinct impression that confirmation, recognising the culmination in the novice's own judgment of what the god-parents committed the child to, is itself the essential part of the baptismal rite. Initiation into the Church is not completed until the member has been confirmed. And if the practice is to become unequivocal, the Church must postpone the actual ceremony of sprinkling or immersion until confirmation. In the practice of the Church before the Reformation, the individuality of the child was absolutely overlooked ; the Church was a spiritual despotism of the extremest order. For until the changes made by the Protestants in the Anglican rite of baptism,

it was exclusively the Bishop and not the candidate who confirmed. Since then, a glaring self-contradiction has confused the significance of the Anglican Order of Confirmation. The last sentence in the last rubric at the end of the Catechism reads, "And, if the Bishop approve of them, *he shall confirm them* in manner following." Yet the Preface to be read by the Bishop or minister appointed by him at the opening of the Confirmation Service is as follows :—

To the end that Confirmation may be ministered to the more edifying of such as shall receive it, the Church hath thought good to order, That none hereafter shall be Confirmed, but such as can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments ; and can also answer to such other Questions, as in the short Catechism are contained : which order is very convenient to be observed ; to the end, that children, being now come to the years of discretion, and having learned what their Godfathers and Godmothers promised for them in Baptism, *they may themselves*, with their own mouth and consent, openly before the Church, *ratify and confirm the same* ; and also promise, that by the grace of God they will evermore endeavour themselves faithfully to observe such things, as they, *by their own confession*, have assented unto.

A rubric immediately follows, instructing the Bishop to say :—

Do ye here, in the presence of God, and of this congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow that was made in your name at your Baptism ; *ratifying and confirming the same in your own persons*, and acknowledging yourselves bound to believe, and to do, all those things, which your Godfathers and Godmothers then undertook for you ?

This self-contradiction is probably not so much due to inadvertence as to conscious compromise. At the time

of the Reformation in England there was such an awakening of spiritual liberty that the leaders of the Church were stirred by conscience or moved by reasons of policy to interpret Confirmation as a ratification by the candidate himself. Yet such had never in a thousand years been the tradition or custom of the Christian Church, and so they were constrained to introduce words which would give a wholly new interpretation. Either the Bishop confirms or the candidate confirms. It must be one or the other ; it cannot be both. Now, since the Prayer Book was last revised, the spirit of liberty has penetrated almost all the institutions, customs and sentiments of English life ; and were the Prayer Book once more to be subjected to revision, without doubt the view that the candidate himself is the one who ratifies the vows made at his baptism would compel a removal of any words to the effect that the Bishop, by the laying on of hands, confirms. But probably no such change would satisfy the fully awakened spirit of social democracy to-day.

It is reasonable to anticipate that infant baptism will be abolished. It is not an accident that the most democratic churches in England and America are those which name themselves after the rite of baptism and which initiate only adults. The Baptists may honestly think that their emphasis of the rite of initiation and their insistence that it shall be undergone only by adults are due wholly to their extreme deference to the authority of the New Testament. They may say that they have no thought of democracy or of ethical fitness or of ecclesiastical polity in their protest against infant baptism ; they may conscientiously maintain that their one motive is to obey and follow Christ even in the pettiest details. But every psychological student of Church life sees plainly that a true instinct of statesmanship lies at the root of their

emphasis of baptism and their exclusion of infants from initiation.

The Baptists in the seventeenth century were competing spiritually, so to speak, against great odds. They were a sect having no famous genius as their organiser and founder, and they had not the advantage of social prestige. In the absence of these worldly advantages, they saw that an immense gain would accrue from making boldly conspicuous the ceremony of initiation, and that to this end they must select the most dramatic form possible—immersion and not dipping. Likewise they refused to allow anyone to undergo the ceremony until of an age when appeal could be made to his moral individuality; and thus they gained his voluntary co-operation, which was a surer asset than any sense of having been already committed in infancy. The initiation of infants into the Church overlooks self-respect, the great dynamic of democracy. Self-respect was the force, when the Baptist denomination was forming, that had begun to defy kings and priests and now was organising religious bodies. No matter what account these organisations may give of themselves, they are inspired far more by instinctive reverence for the child, for the future man and the cause of religious liberty, than for the letter of the New Testament.

But they advanced in reaction against the despotic socialism of pre-Reformation custom too far in the direction of individualistic liberty. They possess no rite or sacrament which recognises the indebtedness of the infant to the spiritual organism of society, the spiritual responsibility of society for the child, and the claim of society to control the child's environment. Nor does the device of the Established Church, whereby the full admission of infants is made ultimately conditional upon

their own ratification of the baptismal vows, meet the needs of the case. If the pre-Reformation custom of infant baptism with episcopal ratification erred in the direction of a crushing socialism, the Protestant tendency to postpone baptism entirely or essentially, without supplementing it by a new sacrament exclusively for infants, errs equally in the opposite direction. There ought to be a rite, not implying responsibility on the part of the child or pledging him, but nevertheless recognising him as an offspring of the spiritual organism of the community, and committing the community to its distinctive obligations towards each new moral agency.

We need a ritual, sacramental in nature, of the receiving of very young children by the national Church and of their dedication by parents to the higher service of the nation. Such a sacrament would bear little outward or even essential resemblance to the present baptismal rite of the Prayer Book. Its construction, therefore, could not proceed by way of re-interpreting or revising the present form; in order to supply the deficiency in our existing manual of religious services, it would be necessary to construct a new rite. I may be permitted, therefore, without recommending its adoption, to describe one tentatively used in ethical societies, as thus I can most easily convey to the reader what I conceive must be the essential nature of a sacrament of the recognition of children.

This tentative ceremony used in a number of ethical societies is opened with these words by the officiating representative of the religious community :—

In old days there were angels who came and took men by the hand, and led them away from the City of Destruction. We see no white-winged angels now. But yet men are led away from threatening destruction : a hand is

put into theirs which leads them forth gently towards a calm and bright land, so that they look no more backward ; and the hand may be a little child's.

Or, as an alternative :—

At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Or this :—

And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them : and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not : for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

Then are chanted the following lines from Emerson :—

Love's hearts are faithful, but not fond ;
Bound for the just, but not beyond ;
Not glad, as the low loving herd,
Of self in other still preferred ;
But they have heartily designed
The benefit of all mankind.

And they serve mankind austere,
After their own genius, clearly,
Without false humility ;
For this is Love's nobility ;—
Not to scatter bread and gold,
Goods and raiment bought and sold ;

But to hold fast his simple sense,
And speak the speech of innocence,
And with hand and body and blood
To make his bosom counsel good.
For he that feeds men serveth few,
While he serves all who dares be true.

Then is read as a lesson any appropriate passage from the Bible or other literature. Two have been favourites in ethical societies on such occasions. One of these is Wordsworth's "Ode on Intimations of Immortality," the chief theme of which is neither immortality nor the doctrine of pre-natal reminiscence, but—in the very spirit of Christ's own words—the glorious innocence and docility of children, their admiring wonder and curiosity, their audacious faith, displayed in their readiness for new adventure, as compared with the over-cautious prudence, indifference and apathy, excessive self-interest and conventionality, prevalent among adults. The other is a condensation of the passage in George Eliot's *Silas Marner* which culminates in the sentences given above as opening words of the ceremony—where she tenderly and graphically presents the humanising effect upon a miser of the transfer of his affections from his gold to a little child. After the reading and the singing of a hymn, the minister pronounces this exordium, taken almost without alteration from a passage in Sir John Seeley's *Ecce Homo* :—

How were those men and women brought up who have become for the most part pure, generous and humane? With rare exceptions, they were reared by parents who had these qualities, they lived in a society which had a high tone, they were accustomed daily and hourly to see just acts done, to hear gentle words spoken; and the justness and the gentleness passed into their hearts, and slowly moulded their habits, making their moral discernment clear.

Such men and women, looking back to their childhood, remember commands and prohibitions which it is a pleasure to obey for the sake of those who gave them. Often they think of those who are absent or dead, and say, "How would this action appear to father, if he knew?" or "Would mother have approved or disapproved that word?" To such, no baseness appears a small baseness because its consequences may be small; nor does the yoke of law seem burdensome, although it is ever on their necks; nor do they dream of covering a sin by an atoning act of virtue. Often in solitude they blush when some impure fancy sails across the clear heaven of their minds: because they are never alone, because the absent Examples, the Authorities they still revere, rule not their actions only but their inmost hearts; because their conscience is indeed awake and alive, representing all the nobleness with which they stand in sympathy, and reporting their most hidden indecorum before a public opinion of the absent and the dead.

Then, as an introduction to the ceremony of the parents' pledge, the minister says:—

It is a time-honoured custom among religious fellowships to welcome into their midst the young children of members. The mother and father, grateful for the innocent fresh life which has blest their love, and feeling their obligation to bring up their children in the path of rectitude, are well pleased and anxious to make an acknowledgment of their joy and duty, in the presence of those with whom they are bound in spiritual communion. Just as they sought upon the occasion of marriage the sanction and blessing of the State and of Humanity; so after the birth of a child they again, as it were, summon the community to recognise and approve the precious little life which they have brought into the world. They are aware also that the upbringing of the child does not rest in their hands alone. For good or ill, the neighbourhood, the city, the nation, the whole world will exercise influence. The parents therefore turn to the community, to secure its help and goodwill.

They invite it, through the religious company of friends and sympathisers, to acknowledge and assume joint re-

sponsibility with themselves. It is in this spirit that we are now to perform the ceremony of dedicating to the good life, and welcoming (*here state the full name of the child*), who has been brought here by his (*or her*) parents this morning. As representing this assembly and speaking in the name of Humanity, I invite (*here give the names of the father and mother*) with their little child (*here again naming the child by its Christian name*) to stand before me.

Will you, the father and mother of this little boy (*or girl*), not only care for his (*or her*) bodily health and outward prosperity in life, but do your utmost to see that he (*or she*) grows up to be high-minded and brave, shielding him (*or her*) from the stain of evil, instilling into his (*or her*) spirit principles of love and duty, and training him (*or her*) not only to self-respect and self-control, but to social service and consideration for others? Will you teach him (*or her*) to think for himself (*or herself*), and help him (*or her*) to choose as the chief end of his (*or her*) life the making of the world purer, braver and happier for his (*or her*) having lived in it? (*The parents reply: We will.*)

Thus have these parents publicly dedicated their child to Righteousness of Life and the Peace of Righteousness.

Then the minister adds:—

And now, in recognition of the human claim which this child has upon all of us, and upon all men, I request the members of this church and other kindly disposed persons present in this congregation to rise and stand (*the congregation rises*) while I place this wreath of flowers, as a symbol of human love, which is the crown of human life, upon the head of this child. (*Here the wreath is placed upon the child's head.*)

Likewise I give to the parents for their child two of the best books ever written, to be kept for him (*or her*) until he (*or she*) be grown up. The books are works of two great and good men. These men were of different religions: one was a Pagan and one a Christian; but both were lovers of righteousness and of all mankind—Marcus Aurelius, the good Emperor of Rome, and Thomas à Kempis, the humble Brother of the Common Life. These two have been chosen that together they may come

to stand in the memory of this child as a sign of the broad spirit of ethical religion, which turns to every source of good for strength and inspiration. In each of these volumes I have inscribed the name of the child and the date and occasion of this service.

With the placing of this wreath upon his (*or her*) head we bestow our blessing upon this child ; and with this gift of books we acknowledge ourselves responsible together with the parents to bring home to his (*or her*) heart the truth that makes men free, the beauty that graces life, and the love that hallows it.

Then is sung whatever hymn may be deemed fit, and a discourse suitable to the occasion is delivered ; after which another hymn is sung, and the ceremony is ended with these words by the minister :—

And righteousness shall be the girdle or his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid ; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together ; and a little child shall lead them.

In this ceremony two essential points are clearly emphasised—the parents' pledge of responsibility and the community's ; but in three particulars the form is deficient.

In the first place, the supreme recognition by a community of the individuality of each child born is that it gives him, and he thereby owns, a separate name. The rite of welcoming and dedicating a child might well start with the formal conferring of its name. The social significance of the naming of a child is recognised by the Church of England, although it confuses the point by introducing on the same occasion the admission of the child into the Church as a member. Such initiation will be deferred until the child's maturity, when the Church

realises that it is not the new-born babe that comes to the Church, but the Church that comes to the new-born babe. A naming ceremony is a recognition by the Church-nation of the child as a moral agent ; and when we fully appreciate the philosophy of names, we shall see that no more exquisite symbol than such a ceremony could be found for the community's welcome of infants.

It is possible that someone may ask what affair it is of the Church to name a child. But such a question could only arise where there had been a separation not merely of Church and State but of Church and nation, and a forgetting of the social significance of religion. If we adopt the philosophy of the Church advocated in this book, we shall recognise that the Church in welcoming the child is the nation acting in its capacity of teacher, philosopher and friend. The civil State at present enforces the registration of every infant's name within a few weeks after its birth ; but when religious nationalism exercises its proper influence, this registration will be in the hands of the Church officials, and will accompany the ritual of welcome, as the registration of marriages accompanies the wedding ceremony.

Another element lacking in the form I have presented, but contained in the Church's rite, is the assuming of responsibility for the child's moral welfare by three persons acting as representatives of the Church—that is, of the nation as a spiritual organism. It is far from adequate that the congregation should simply rise as a sign of acknowledgment of the community's responsibility, or that a wreath should be placed upon the head of the child ; for the responsibility of the community should be fixed and centralised in definite persons who publicly assume its obligation. So significant and essential in the child's life is this assumption of responsi-

bility by others besides the parents, that one at first marvels that in the actual practice of Church members it should have lost its meaning.

The only way to account for the decay of so important a pledge is by the general falling away of interest in the teachings of the Church as they have hitherto been interpreted, and the consequent sense of hollowness and worthlessness imputed to its ritual. Suppose, for instance, that the godparents were reminded by the priest to do their utmost to see, not that the child should "renounce the devil and all his works," but that it should be disciplined to truthfulness, honesty, self-respect, temperance and the service of others. In modern speech, and from the modern point of view of the moral life, the words "renounce the devil and all his works" do not point definitely enough to what, without doubt, was originally meant ; for while the existence of the devil as a person is almost universally discredited, the word has not as yet come into general use as indicating the organic energy of social evil. And if the child is only to renounce a being whom nobody believes to exist, he is to renounce very little. The godparents are further exhorted to see that the child is taught to believe in God ; but here again, such vagueness prevails as to what God is, that it is not quite clear what the laymen who pledge themselves are to do. They are further to see that the child is taught how solemn is the promise which he has made through them as his representatives. But this whole notion that the godparents represent the child and speak in his stead is misleading. They represent the nation-Church, the State-Church, and not the child. When they promise to teach the child, they are not making a promise of something the child is to do ; they are assuming the rôle of a guardian and teacher, and they do

this on behalf of the community ; in everything they say the community is speaking.

There is something unreal and painfully confused in this part of the Church's service. It was constructed hastily, and, despite the hundreds of years in which it has been in use, it has never yet been carefully thought out and analysed ; had it been, a humanistic revision of it would have been made generations ago. The truth is, there was in the sixteenth century no clear understanding of what a child is, no recognition of the true individuality of anyone—least of all of children. There was not a full recognition even of the national function of the Church itself. And the makers of the ritual were also handicapped by the pernicious notion that the whole rule of life is to be found in the Bible and in the systematised wisdom of past ages. There was also prevalent a mechanical use of certain words as if they possessed a special sanctity ; for example, the frequent repetition by the Prayer Book of the expression, "renounce the devil and all his works." Why did not its framers sometimes paraphrase such a clause into purely ethical terms ? Had they done so, they would have brought home to the laity the real psychological processes and factors involved in renouncing "the devil and all his works."

The only answer is that the fullness of time had not come. The human mind had not arrived at the stage when it could see through the words to the mental and social realities behind.

Again, there survives, in the exhortation that the godparents shall call upon the child to hear sermons, the old-fashioned limitation of religious education to the preaching of set sermons. Suppose, instead, that the godparents were urged by the Church to send the child to the best schools, where he would learn the results of science, where he would

be trained to investigate the laws of the universe in which he must live, and be encouraged to observe for himself and draw his own conclusions from the data of first-hand experience. Then there would be a ring of reality about the minister's exhortation to the godparents, which would immediately fill their now empty pledge with solemn duties for themselves and real benefits for the child. Suppose that, instead of telling them that the child should be taught the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments, they were charged that he should be brought to understand the chief responsibilities of citizenship, the evolution of the nation's life out of barbarism into civil society, the present laws and constitution of his country, and the reasons for them; in this way the nation could rescue not only the Church organisation and professional religion, but itself, from much that now threatens its future manliness.

The best part of the exhortation of the priest to the godparents in the baptismal formula is at the end, where the guardians of the child are reminded that "Baptism doth represent unto us our profession; which is, to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto him; that, as he died, and rose again for us, so should we, who are baptised, die from sin, and rise again unto righteousness; continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections, and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living." Here is a most beautiful recognition of the ethical interpretation of resurrection. The supposed death and rising of the body of Christ are taken merely as a physical symbol for ceasing to do wrong and beginning to live the good life. Even one who wholly disbelieves in the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ can scarcely take offence at the allusion here, and the adoption of the legend, if such it be, to symbolise

the most real of all moral experiences—the dying to what is mean, selfish and insincere, and the rising again to a disinterested love of truth and one's fellow-men.

What we clearly need is a thorough reconstruction of the Church's ritual of the recognition of the child. We need a complete elaboration in form of the idea of the community's joint responsibility with the parents to give him every opportunity that he may become fully equipped for human service. Here is an opportunity for the Church to render an inestimable benefit to the nation; and nothing could be more in accord with the spirit of our times. While the nineteenth century was spoken of as the woman's century, the twentieth has already been called the child's; the revelation to our present generation is the child, whom adults had never adequately known or appreciated.

The third deficiency in the child's welcoming service which I have given above is that it contains no adequate symbol of the tenderness of the community's regard for the new life which it recognises. And in the Church's formula, it seems only an incident to the ceremony of dipping, that the infant is received by the minister into his arms; yet this would constitute an exquisite symbol to indicate the community's enfolding protection of the child from adversity and malign influence. The representative of the spiritual offices of the community should take the infant into his arms to indicate that the nation shares with the mother and father their individualised affection and solicitude for their child.

We have, then, suggested four symbolical acts which would beautifully and impressively, because naturally and simply, bring home to every witness the nation's recognition of the child. The ceremonies of the parents' vow, the naming, the godparents' pledge, and the taking

of the child by the priest into his arms, would constitute an adequate ritual. And it will be noticed that the last three acts are contained in the Church's ministration of baptism, though, by being rendered merely incidental to the rite of initiation into Church membership, they are robbed of their proper spiritual significance.

CHAPTER XII

BAPTISM : THE CATECHISM : THE ADMISSION OF MEMBERS

THE main contents of the Catechism consist of the Apostles' Creed, the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer. I have already devoted one chapter to the Creeds and two each to the Commandments and the Lord's Prayer. I therefore need not consider them again in their setting in the Catechism—except perhaps to insist upon the necessity of preventing the bad effects of the child's thinking that he fully or even approximately understands their meaning. A rough-and-ready way of accomplishing this end would be not to teach them to the child at all ; but then the advantage would be lost of bringing these utterances of supreme wisdom into the pre-eminence which they ought to assume in the adult's mind. The foundations must be laid in the period of adolescence if these peaks of thought are to remain firm and solid in the imagination throughout a lifetime. Nor is it necessarily an evil that a child shall learn and often repeat what he can only very imperfectly comprehend. The mischief arises only when his tutors permit him, or even encourage him, to think that he understands more than he does.

Let the child be told that year by year he may come to

see ever deeper meanings in the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments and the Apostles' Creed. Let him learn that even if he lives to be eighty he will never be able fully to comprehend and appreciate them. Let the tutor, with perfect frankness as well as with absolute truth, confess that not even he by any means fully understands. Let the child further know that only as a man comes to have a deep experience and a wide knowledge of life, and has suffered much and thought much and tried faithfully to help on the cause of the good in the world, can he really understand what these great teachings mean. But still more, let him gradually be made to feel that these documents themselves fall far short of the profound realities of human experience which they attempt to formulate, and that the Life is more than the Doctrine which attempts to proclaim it. If the teaching be accompanied by such fundamental qualifications as these, which every true pedagogue will commend, the possibility of holding a creed dogmatically or fanatically or narrowly will be removed. The sting of creeds has always been the sin of the conceit of knowledge, and that is to be traced to a false religious pedagogy.

In striking contrast to the wisdom which selected the Apostles' Creed, the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer, and made them the chief contents of the Catechism, is the lack of moral insight and literary ability displayed in the answers which are introduced for the purpose of elucidating these three great formulas of faith. Immediately following the creed are these questions and answers :—

Question.—What dost thou chiefly learn in these Articles of thy Belief?

Answer.—First, I learn to believe in God the Father, who hath made me, and all the world.

Secondly, in God the Son, who hath redeemed me, and all mankind.

Thirdly, in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me, and all the elect people of God.

These answers seem to me to be constructed on a totally false principle ; they furnish an example of the worst method of teaching. The creed itself is well expressed and short enough ; if there was a reason for dividing it into three portions, the answer to the first question should have been simply the first portion of the creed ; and so with the other two questions. What is the advantage of saying, "First, I learn to believe in God the Father, who hath made me, and all the world," instead of saying, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth" ? It is true that this first portion of the creed does not say that God is the maker of men ; but, inasmuch as it does not say this, it is questionable whether it is wise or right to compel the child now to declare that he learns from it first that the Father made him. As a matter of fact, he does not learn this from the creed ; it is a question even whether it is implicitly involved in it. The second answer declares also what is not a fact. In the Apostles' Creed there is nothing to the effect that God the Son has redeemed "me and all mankind." That "he shall come to judge the quick and the dead" is a totally different assertion from a declaration of the redemption of all mankind. Furthermore, to have been accurate, this second answer ought to have said not "Who hath redeemed me and all mankind," but "Who came to redeem me and all mankind." For it is a current truism in orthodox theological circles that a very large portion of mankind have not been and never will be redeemed. The third answer invented by the writers of the Catechism is altogether

inadequate as a *résumé* of the third portion of the Apostles' Creed ; and, if it presumes to have picked out only those tenets of Christian faith which are the most important, it makes a distinction which is altogether dangerous from an orthodox point of view. Why should the child be compelled to say that in the third place the creed teaches him to believe in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifies him and all the elect people of God, and yet to omit all reference to belief in the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting ?

Even from the conventional point of view as to the interpretation of the Creeds, then, these answers of the Church are unsatisfactory. I have said that they were constructed on a totally false principle. After such a statement as the Apostles' Creed, if supplementary statements are to be given in elucidation, one should not simply pick out and say over again, in approximately the same words, a few of the same things. A new point of view should have been assumed in the elucidatory answers. When the Catechism of the Prayer Book is revised, the Apostles' Creed should be followed by three answers which will re-interpret the three parts from the point of view of psychology, sociology and ethics—pointing to the same realities of life, but in terms of mental science, social philosophy and the distinctively moral judgment. I shall not attempt to propose such answers ; but what their substance would be can easily be gathered from my chapter on the Creeds.

The three answers which are given in elucidation of the Ten Commandments happily catch something of the dignity and spirit of the original document. With their questions, they are :—



Question.—What dost thou chiefly learn by these Commandments?

Answer.—I learn two things : my duty towards God, and my duty towards my Neighbour.

Question.—What is thy duty towards God?

Answer.—My duty towards God, is to believe in him, to fear him, and to love him with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul, and with all my strength ; to worship him, to give him thanks, to put my whole trust in him, to call upon him, to honour his holy Name and his Word, and to serve him truly all the days of my life.

Question.—What is thy duty towards thy Neighbour?

Answer.—My duty towards my Neighbour, is to love him as myself, and to do to all men, as I would they should do unto me : To love, honour, and succour my father and mother : To honour and obey the King, and all that are put in authority under him : To submit myself to all my governors, teachers, spiritual pastors and masters : To order myself lowly and reverently to all my betters : To hurt no body by word nor deed : To be true and just in all my dealing : To bear no malice nor hatred in my heart : To keep my hands from picking and stealing, and my tongue from evil-speaking, lying and slandering : To keep my body in temperance, soberness, and chastity : Not to covet nor desire other men's goods ; but to learn and labour truly to get mine own living, and to do my duty in that state of life, unto which it shall please God to call me.

But thus to give further instances and a mere elaboration in other words of what the commandments express in general principle and in aphoristic form is not what here is most needed by the catechumen. Any teacher versed in modern psychology and the principles of education would agree with me that there is little occasion for the child to repeat again what his duties to God are, they having been committed to memory already by the child. What is really needed is an answer to the question, "What is God, who merits my worship, whose name I shall not take in vain, and whose day I shall hallow?" And when

the question is asked "What is the God I am to worship?" it is quite evident that the way for a teacher to answer is to point out, from among all the factors in human experience, that one to which the term refers. Then the child would be made to feel that God exists and to see why he should believe in him, fear him, love him, worship him, thank him, trust him, call upon him, honour and serve him. No greater blow at moral scepticism could be dealt than by such an answer, well forged from undeniable elements at hand in the experience even of the young.

Nor is there occasion, after the last six commandments have been committed to memory and explained at length by the teacher, for requiring another *résumé*, however beautifully expressed, to be committed to memory as if it were on a par with the Decalogue itself. Far more to the purpose would be an answer to the question, "Why ought I to honour father and mother and not kill or be faithless in affection or steal or bear false witness or covet?" The answer naturally would again be given from the point of view of mental and social experience and of the moral judgment. I believe no one device could do more to raise the popular sense of the imperativeness, inviolability and feasibility of duty to one's neighbour than the learning by heart, on the part of every child in the nation at the age of thirteen or fourteen, along with the Ten Commandments, of a statement indicating the dire consequences to the mind and body not only of oneself but of those one loves, which come from not honouring parents, from murdering, from violating pledges of loyalty, from stealing, false witnessing and coveting. Few young people realise how the whole framework of their lives is dependent upon the performance by others of social duties, and few conceive how much of the suffering is due to the failure on the part of others, both living

to-day and in past ages, to do their duty to their neighbour. Yet the Catechism throws no light whatever on the national motives which prompted the Jewish statesmen ages ago to formulate the Ten Commandments.

In the Catechism the Lord's Prayer is immediately followed by this question and answer :—

Question.—What desirest thou of God in this Prayer ?

Answer.—I desire my Lord God our heavenly Father, who is the giver of all goodness, to send his grace unto me, and to all people ; that we may worship him, serve him, and obey him, as we ought to do. And I pray unto God, that he will send us all things that be needful both for our souls and bodies ; and that he will be merciful unto us, and forgive us our sins ; and that it will please him to save and defend us in all dangers ghostly and bodily ; and that he will keep us from all sin and wickedness, and from our ghostly enemy, and from everlasting death. And this I trust he will do of his mercy and goodness, through our Lord Jesus Christ. And therefore I say, Amen, So be it.

Probably there is no jealous lover of the Prayer Book as it is, whose devotion could blind him into approving of this answer. Surely no one who loves the Lord's Prayer can fail to resent this attempt to make it clear to the mind of anyone, young or old, who presumably is being introduced into the mysteries of the Christian religion. For although the answer may point to the details of the Lord's Prayer, it is infinitely more difficult to understand than the prayer itself. It is clumsy and uncouth ; its sentences are constructed with a carelessness wholly unbecoming on the part of those who were appointed to frame it. Why in the first sentence is there a shifting from "I" and "my" to "our," then back again to "me," and then to "we" ? There is nothing in the Lord's Prayer to justify anything but the plural of the first personal pronoun. But the defects of this whole answer

are of an order which places it below the possibility of emendation. What light, for instance, is thrown upon "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" by paraphrasing it into "Save and defend us in all dangers ghostly and bodily, and keep us from all sin and wickedness, and from our ghostly enemy, and from everlasting death"? And this answer, despite its being twice as long as the Lord's Prayer, finds no room for the characteristic and essential qualification which the prayer gives to the clause "Forgive us our trespasses."

There is needed, in order to supplement the Lord's Prayer, the question, "What do the different parts of this prayer mean?" and a brief answer which would indicate the mental, social and moral significance of each clause. It should be briefly pointed out to the catechumen that the prayer can be fully entered into only by one who is devoting his life in co-operation with others for the establishment of social justice on earth, and has surrendered the pursuit of wealth, forgiven all offenders against himself, and avoids all exposure to moral evil which is not inevitable in his mission.

The series of questions and answers which follows the part which I have just been criticising is more nearly in accord with the requirements of educational science. The real information is given on matters essential to a right understanding of the Church. Nothing could, for instance, be better pedagogically than the following three questions and answers:—

Question.—How many Sacraments hath Christ ordained in his Church?

Answer.—Two only, as generally necessary to salvation, that is to say, Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord.

Question.—What meanest thou by this word *Sacrament*?

Answer.—I mean an outward and visible sign of an

inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof.

Question.—How many parts are there in a Sacrament ?

Answer.—Two ; the outward visible sign, and the inward spiritual grace.

The answer to the next question, “What is the outward visible sign or form in Baptism ?” seems to me not correct. It should not be “Water,” but “Washing with water.” The reply to the question, “What is the inward and spiritual grace ?” is at least well conceived and expressed, although it would require much elucidation to bring home its real significance. It is “A death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness. For being by nature born in sin and the children of wrath, we are hereby made the children of grace.” Then follows the question, “What is required of persons to be baptised ?” to which the answer is given, “Repentance, whereby they forsake sin ; and Faith, whereby they stedfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that Sacrament.” The next question and answer read :—

Why then are Infants baptised, when by reason of their tender age they cannot perform them ?

Because they promise them both by their Sureties ; which promise, when they come to age, themselves are bound to perform.

This question and answer, of course, would fall away if infant baptism were abolished. In case of such an event, it might be well to substitute the question, “Why are infants not baptised ?” and the answer, “Because by reason of their tender age they cannot promise repentance and faith.”

In regard to the Catechism, as in regard to the special rites of the Church, the immediate problem is not revision and indeed not even re-interpretation of formulæ already sanctioned by the Church, but rather the formulation and

adoption of alternative items. The introduction of a new Catechism in place of the old is not within the range of practical politics, but much nearer is the permission to bishops to use certain alternatives. It is not my purpose to submit any such compositions to my reader, as it would be easy for him to surmise from the foregoing chapters what would be their substance. I am more anxious to win his consideration for a ceremony which in my judgment would serve the interests of national religious unity, were it (or something like it) to be adopted as an alternative to the rites of adult baptism and confirmation. Such adoption would leave all those perfectly free who prefer the present forms ; but, however defective the alternative I submit, there will probably be no disputing my contention that it would prove itself congenial to the spiritual requirements of all those earnest and devoted citizens who now hold themselves aloof from the Church organisation because they are agnostics, rationalists and scientific sceptics of supernaturalism, and are believers in religious democracy as opposed to the supremacy of the clergy. Having such persons in mind (and including myself among them), I have asked myself what should be the ritualistic act of admission, what ideas it would be socially expedient to incorporate into a form of initiation into the Church, and what would be the best literary embodiments of these ideas. As regards the sign, for several reasons it might be better to adopt one which in no wise resembled immersion in water. Although less harmonious with and suggestive of the spiritual meaning of admission, a new sign would be free—because of its novelty—from any associations repellent to the scientific and democratic mind. It might, moreover, be more expressive of that sense of identification of God with the higher selfhood of the individual which is so characteristic

of the new religious thought of our day—that is, it might express the inwardness of the sources of redemption better than could the act of immersion. Of such a character would be the simple act, on the part of the candidate for admission, of rising in the congregation when called upon by its representative to do so, in token of his commitment to the Church's work and principles; and accordingly I assume in the formula which I submit that this is to constitute the ritualistic sign. The idea, with an expression of which it seems to me the rite of initiation should open, is that of faith in the spiritual unity of the Church-nation, for it is conscious identification with the Church-nation that the candidate is seeking, and the motive must be belief in the sanctity and spiritual necessity of the merging of his own will with the universal will of the Church; it must be a recognition of the spiritual organism of society as the ultimate source of individual character and as the one reality for the defence of which the sacrifice of self is no sacrifice.

Perhaps no finer and stronger embodiment of this idea can be found in the literature of any nation than the lines from George Eliot's *Spanish Gipsy* where Zarca declares loyalty to one another to be the faith of his people:—

Ours is a faith
 Taught by no priest, but by our beating hearts :
 Faith to each other : the fidelity
 Of men whose pulses leap with kindred fire,
 Who in the flash of eyes, the clasp of hands,
 Nay, in the silent bodily presence, feel
 The mystic stirrings of a common life
 That makes the many one.

The opening of the rite with the speaking of these lines by the minister could not but fill the heart of the initiate with the glad enthusiasm of spiritual fellowship; but, in

contrast to this idea of surrender of the individual to the general will of the Church-nation, and as a corrective to its excessive dominance over the spirit of the novice, should be introduced as a second idea the Church's own high estimation and sense of the infinite preciousness of each individual member. The newcomer must not be overpowered in his individuality by the sense even of the Social Self ; for, while seeming to lose, he is ultimately to find his true individuality in the life of the nation. And this rejoicing of the Church over the entrance of the novice would be not simply an idea, but an immediate and present reality, if the speaking of the opening words were to be followed by the chanting of Walt Whitman's undying hymn of religious reverence for the highest that waits intrinsically in every individual mind :—

Painters have painted their swarming groups, and the
centre figure of all,
From the head of the centre figure spreading a nimbus of
gold-colour'd light ;
But I paint myriads of heads, but paint no head without
its nimbus of gold-colour'd light.
From my hand, from the brain of every man and woman
it streams, effulgently flowing for ever.
Whoever you are, now I place my hand upon you, that you
be my poem.
I will leave all, and come and make the hymns of you.
None has understood you, but I understand you ;
None has done justice to you—you have not done justice
to yourself ;
None but has found you imperfect ; I only find no
imperfection in you ;
None but would subordinate you ; I only am he who will
never consent to subordinate you ;
I only am he who places over you no master, owner,
better, God, beyond what waits intrinsically in yourself.
There is no endowment in man or woman that is not tallied
in you ;

There is no virtue, no beauty in man or woman, but as good
is in you ;

No pluck, no endurance in others, but as good is in you ;

No pleasure waiting for others, but an equal pleasure waits
for you.

I sing the songs of the glory of none, not God, sooner than
I sing the songs of the glory of you.

The chanting of these words would tend to stir the heart of the whole congregation with gladness, loyalty and the deference of welcome. The very spirit of the Church moves through the strong rhythm of Whitman's lines and glows and shines in their imagery, and would enfold the newcomer in the tenderness of their confidential tone of intimacy. Indeed, only the Church—since it alone forgives and has the power to wash away sins—can announce the essential perfection and beauty, the inherent humanity of every individual soul. But a third idea is suggested by the occasion. The Church not only rejoices in the newcomer and encourages him by recognition of the spiritual worth of every moral agent ; she accompanies her gladness of redeeming love with explanation and instruction, with guidance, both rational and practical. The Church is not a new-born nor an inexperienced organisation ; it has been shaped, drilled and strengthened in its work of redemption by centuries of experiment and discipline ; it has learned to know both itself and the world in which, for the world's sake, it has struggled to keep alive and to gain ascendancy. Therefore it is fitting that the liturgy of admission, although it may begin with the expression of the initiate's glad surrender and the Church's joyous welcome, should pass forthwith to his instruction in the idea which is the essential bond of Church fellowship. The novice should be illuminated as to the specific end and direction of the step he is taking. He ought to be

told as nearly as possible what he is doing, and the nature of his act should be contrasted with similar yet not identical acts with which it might be confused.

The closest approach to such a statement which I have been able to find is in the chapters entitled "Christ's Winnowing Fan" and "Membership in Christ's Kingdom," in Sir John Seeley's *Ecce Homo*. Therein, two spurious tests of membership, the falsity of which the Church is only now beginning to detect, are exposed with simplicity and lucidity ; but a still greater triumph of historical and ethical genius is Seeley's formulation of the only wise and just condition of membership. Although he was here writing chapters in a book, yet the nature of his style and the spirit which informs it are such that one perhaps could not do better than to adopt as closely as possible his very words as a formula in the Church's ceremony of initiation. Using his chapter thus, one might construct a statement like the following for the instruction of the initiate as to the meaning of Church membership :—

The Church Ethical rejects two possible tests of membership and accepts a third. She rejects *correctness of outward conduct* and *soundness of intellectual belief*. She accepts, instead, that rudiment of goodness called *moral faith*.

As to correctness of outward conduct, she does not ask that a man shall actually be good before becoming a member ; but she demands that he shall admire goodness and fervently desire to become good ; in other words, that he shall be stirred by moral enthusiasm and steadied by moral faith.

The reason for not making goodness, but the desire to be good, the test of membership, is that a man may be potentially just and merciful, yet from defect of training he may be actually neither. We want a test which shall admit all who have it in them to be good, whether their good qualities be trained or not. Such a test is found in moral faith. He who, when goodness is impressively put

before him, exhibits an instinctive loyalty to it, starts forward to take its side, trusts himself to it ; such a man has faith, and the root of the matter is in such a man. He may have habits of vice, but the loyal and faithful instinct in him will place him above many that practise virtue. He may be rude in thought and character, but he will spontaneously gravitate towards what is right. Other virtues can scarcely thrive without a fine natural organisation and a happy training. But the most neglected and ungifted of men may make a beginning with moral faith. Other virtues want cultivation ; but even in half-brutal countenances this faith will light up a glimmer of nobleness. He who can do little else, can wonder and worship and enthusiastically obey. He who cannot of himself know what is right can know that someone else knows ; he who cannot find the way himself can follow a guide ; he who is incapable of justice may be capable of fidelity ; he who is far from perfect may give himself up to a cause or an idea which he feels to be great and good ; he who understands little may have his sins forgiven because he loves much.

For the same reasons the Church does not demand soundness of intellectual belief. She sees that it is as hard to think rightly as to act rightly or even to feel rightly. She knows that if the way to right action is beset by corrupt habits and misleading passions, the path to truth is overgrown with prejudices and strewn with fallen theories and decaying systems which hide it from view. It were monstrous, therefore, that error of intellectual belief should be severely punished. The world at large think it quite easy to find truth and inexcusable to miss it. And no wonder ! For by finding truth they mean only learning by rote the maxims current around them. But not so the Church. She, moreover, has still another ground for not requiring intellectual conformity. She exacts something higher—the power of arriving at truth. Stern censure she visits upon those who, overwhelmed with difficulties or afraid of public opinion, stop striving to see for themselves and rest content with pretending that they believe.

The Church Ethical is lenient of error but cannot tolerate mere outward conformity, because moral enthusiasm,

which is her test of membership, not only purifies the heart and fortifies the will, but opens the eyes of reason, giving clearness of vision, understanding, and the power to think for oneself.

Thus the Church calls to her fellowship only those who love and want to serve mankind ; thus, also, her call itself becomes her winnowing fan, separating those who do not care for mankind from those who do, the chaff from the wheat, that the wheat, gathered together, may be the more of use.

These words of ethical instruction would not fail to create in the mind of the novice a sense of new spiritual liberty and power and an aspiration to join his own to the energies of others in tasks of human service.

Thus directed and strengthened in moral faith, the initiate might now well be reminded that the service of others is also his own truest peace and perfection. This idea would be exquisitely communicated to all present by the singing of George Eliot's well-known hymn of praise and prayer :—

O may I join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence ; live
In pulses stirred to generosity,
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
For miserable aims that end with self,
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,
And with their mild persistence urge man's search
To vaster issues.
So to live is heaven.

But we have not yet exhausted the definite thoughts which admission to the Church naturally suggests. After such expressions of scorn for miserable aims that end with self, it would be a still more terrible thing than without them if the initiate were now hypocritically to

undergo the symbolical act of admission to an ethical fellowship, or if the older members were insincerely to pledge themselves to loyalty to the newcomer. At this point, then, in the ceremony the novice should be reminded of the imperative duty of self-examination. There is to be found, in the Prayer Book's preliminary invitation to attend and participate in Holy Communion, an appeal of this order, expressed in discreet and dignified phrase. As one reads it, one cannot escape feeling that the advice it administers is even more essential in the rite of initiation than in that for the renewal of loyalty. There would be an advantage in partly appropriating this appeal, in that the retention of its phrases would preserve a continuity of association and thus lend historic depth of vista to the ceremony. Accordingly, in the following address, into the midst of which is introduced the proposed ceremonial act to serve as a sign of initiation, I have incorporated some of the phrases from the preliminary invitation of the Church's Communion Service :—

When we enter into a society which avows moral enthusiasm to be its bond of union, it is befitting that we consider the dignity and holy responsibility of such fellowship. For there would be great peril both to ourselves and others in unworthily and hypocritically professing membership. We should, therefore, search our own conscience, and not lightly and after the manner of self-deceivers, but so that we may enter holy and clean into such a spiritual union.

The ways and means thereto are : First, to examine our lives and conversations by the known and accepted rules of righteousness ; and wherein we shall perceive ourselves to have offended, by will, word or deed, there to deplore our fault, and to confess it to ourselves with full and deliberate purpose of amendment of life. And if we shall perceive our offences to be such as are not only inward and against conscience, but also against our neighbours, we shall

reconcile ourselves to them, making restitution and rendering satisfaction, according to the uttermost of our powers, for all injuries and wrongs done by us to any others. We should be likewise ready to forgive others that have offended us, as we would have forgiveness of our offences. Otherwise, membership in a church and participation in its work may but increase our moral obliquity.

Therefore, if any one of you who are now to enter this society be in secret no lover of righteousness, but a hinderer of it, licentious, or an oppressor of his fellows, or be in malice or envy, or any other grievous crime, let him root out this evil from his heart and life, lest a profession of allegiance to our fellowship add hypocrisy to his weakness, harden his heart and corrupt the good that be in him.

And if there be any of you that cannot quiet his own conscience within, but requires further comfort or counsel, let him seek out from among our number some discreet, just and wise friend, and open his grief; that by the ministry of our fellowship he may be healed and comforted.

The following persons have expressed their desire to become members of this church :—

(Here would be read the names.)

I therefore, on behalf of this church, ask you whom I have named, to rise and stand in this assembly (*the new members rise*), as a pledge of your sincerity, and of your fidelity not only to our principles but to all of us as members and to the society itself as a whole. We need you. It is true that a fellowship in devotion to the cause of the good in the world, however few in numbers, is a mighty strength and consolation to each member. But the larger the number of the loyal, the higher rises the spiritual tide of confidence and hope, the clearer becomes the vision of the perfect life, and the easier its attainment. We may need you also simply as friends in the everyday relations of life, to advise us when we err, to comfort us when we are afflicted in mind, body or estate, and to minister to us in want. We are a society of friends, not only in the higher pursuits of life, but bound together in all the interests of our common humanity. And we may have occasion to call upon you for help. We shall do so, knowing that we shall find you true and ready, considerate and kind.

And you also may need us. Do not attempt to lead the higher life in isolation—for your own sake as well as ours. Share your life not only with special ones of us, but with our fellowship as a whole. If any ill, any temptation, any vexation, any trial come upon you, it is our privilege to know, and to serve you. Do not wait until dire extremity of any kind overtake you, but come betimes, that the worst may not befall you and us. Have the confidence of unsuspecting trust. You will not find us perfect; but if you put in your claim upon us, if you take us at our best—at our word uttered at this hour—we shall not fail you.

I therefore request all the members present, as a pledge of their fidelity to you severally, and as a renewal of their loyalty to our society and its principles, to rise (*Here the members rise*) and stand, while we join in singing Clough's great hymn of fellow-help, "In our hands we will upbear thee."

HYMN

When the enemy is near thee,
In our hands we will upbear thee;
He shall neither scathe nor scare thee,
He shall fly thee and shall fear thee.

Call on us!

Call when all good friends have left thee,
Of good sights and sounds bereft thee;
Call when hope and heart are sinking,
And the brain is sick with thinking:

Help, O help!

When the panic comes upon thee,
Hope and choice have all foregone thee,
Fate and force are closing o'er thee,
And but one way stands before thee,

Call on us!

Oh, and if thou dost not call,
Be but faithful, that is all.
Go right on, and close behind thee
There shall follow still and find thee
Help, sure help.

None of the elements which I have thus far proposed for a rite of initiation, although each contributes a thought and an emotion of its own, indicates the disciplines into which the new member enters. Yet such an indication ought not to be omitted, since a formula spoken in a ceremony has a weight tenfold that of the same statement read privately in a book, and since a ceremony ought to be utilised to the full for the benefit of the participants and of the Church herself.

Before submitting a formula setting forth the spiritual functions of the Church, let me again remind the reader that a religious rite is not primarily for æsthetic entertainment. It should not, of course, be so long or monotonous or so difficult to understand as to fatigue the listener ; indeed, it must interest him, and to this extent be an entertainment, in order that its instruction may not be in vain ; but up to the point of not wearying and exhausting the average power of attention, it should offer as much real instruction as possible and should be as serious and strenuous as it can be without creating impatience and protest. It should offer more food for thought than can on the instant be fully assimilated. Indeed, it should be so compact of nutritive substance that the novice for the rest of his life may return to it again and again and each time be able to draw new strength from it. There is another reason for as great compactness as is consistent with lucidity : a liturgy which is intended to be heard many times must be practically inexhaustible in suggestiveness, for then it will continually, by appealing afresh to the soul, become more and more loved ; otherwise it will in time be outgrown and finally discarded. With a feeling that it is not so much beauty of form as depth and appositeness of meaning which enables a formula to stand the test of long familiarity, I would suggest the following

abstract homily on the disciplines of the Church as the next item in its rite of initiation :—

In joining the Church, you enter into a threefold discipline. You come more intimately than before under the influence of the Moral Ideal itself, of Individual Men and Women striving to embody it in their lives, and of the Church as a spiritual fellowship.

As to the influence of the Moral Ideal itself : in joining the Church you vow direct allegiance to the law of duty within the spirit of every man. This is the discipline of Reason. The inner law enjoins upon you self-respect, self-reliance and the falling back upon your intuition as upon your God ; it demands the exercise of your moral judgment and the seeking after truth for yourself. This discipline will quicken your insight ; it will beget in you understanding and wisdom. It will lead you to the discovery of new meanings and new duties in life. It will emancipate you from outworn traditions and the tyrannies of public opinion. It will stimulate you to moral originality, and train you to welcome and appreciate originality in others. It will arouse in you fresh interest in all spheres of thought and fact, and make you bold to become pioneers of better institutions.

But by itself the discipline of Reason is not adequate. If it be not supplemented, it makes a man cold and critical, pedantic and unsocial, mechanical in life and blind to the manifold beauty and richness of the world of nature and humanity. In addition to it, a man must have intimate communion with the life of good men and women. This is the discipline of Living Personality. It is equal in beneficence and dignity with the discipline of Reason. Not to avail ourselves of the friendship of the wise is as fatal as to neglect the use of our own moral intelligence. It is the companionship of the good which keeps us human, sane and pure, humble, grateful and glad ; for it is easy with the good to be good. Grace and beauty of mind come from contact with the minds of others.

Let no one of you, therefore, set Reason or the Moral Law above Persons who manifest it. Never forget that, while the ethical ideal is over us and above us, it emanates

from us ; it has sprung out of the actual experience of mankind and grown brighter through the ages. The vision of what ought to be is the secret heart and meaning of what is ; it is not an alien standard imposed upon us. Do not worship the Moral Ideal in its abstract dignity only ; but, since it is the soul of the actual, turn equally to good persons, whether they be preserved for you in literature and history or whether they bless your daily life by their presence.

But Reason, even when reinforced by the influence of Good Persons, is still not adequate to secure the rounded development of your character. Despite the company of the best—nay, because of it—you may be in danger of moral exclusiveness, of intolerance, of spiritual haughtiness, and even of cruelty towards the less gifted, the vicious and the unfortunate. You may be tempted to avoid contact with those who, although they offend, may need you most and would cleanse you best. You may lose your grip of the responsibilities of life. You may be in danger of becoming idly good. You must belong to an organised movement for the redemption of the world ; only absorption in such a movement can give you the strength, enthusiasm and compassion you need.

This third discipline we find in the influence of the Church as a whole upon its members. The Spirit of the Church will not permit you to rest except as you seek to make its fellowship all-embracing. It is not satisfied if anyone is left out. The enthusiasm of the Church's mission creates in us a thirst for the co-operating love of all mankind.

The Moral Ideal, moreover, is essentially social, and can never be adequately manifested in an individual person, however holy. Only a Church-nation is able to reveal the fullness of human perfection.

You, who have now entered into this fellowship, must therefore be loyal not only to Reason, and not only to one holy man or to many good persons, but to a communion devoted to the ideal of humanity.

It would be fatal, however, to magnify even the Church at the expense of righteous persons or the law of reason ; not even to the Church must be subordinated either individual persons or that vision which may never be fully embodied in any society.

Let each one of you, then, submit his spirit equally to Reason that gives Law, to Friends who give Love, and to the Community that gives Life.

Following this homily, a hymn of social prophecy might be sung, and then the service ended by the minister with Keble's exquisite words depicting the serene strength of those whom the secret of the higher life sustains :—

There are in this loud stunning tide
Of human care and crime,
With whom the melodies abide
Of the everlasting chime ;
Who carry music in their heart
Through dusky lane and wrangling mart,
Plying their daily toil with busier feet
Because their secret souls a holier strain repeat.

CHAPTER XIII

THE COMMUNION SERVICE

IN the sacrament of the Lord's Supper one sees the life and thought of the Christian Church both at their best and at their worst. This is what one would naturally expect : for if there be, as I believe, a fundamental error in the Christian scheme of redemption—its trust in superhuman agents—then in its most intense sacrament this error would find its boldest embodiment. At the same time, it is natural that here also the ethical and human elements should be manifested in their highest power.

Indeed, it is characteristic of Judaism and Christianity throughout their evolution, that those ceremonies and doctrines which are of greatest social utility are at the same time most in need of radical revision. It has been inevitably so. The tracing of inner experiences to the action of superhuman agents has been an attempt at a philosophical or scientific explanation of the profounder sequences of the moral life. These deeper facts did not find a place in the order of everyday events ; and they, therefore, were especially attributed to preternatural sources. Hence one may be almost certain that, wherever theology most defies the law of secondary causes, there lies hidden the deepest and tenderest of experiences.

Thus it comes about that the heights of moral discipline have always hitherto been also the pinnacles of supernaturalism ; and that dogmas, instead of being merely barren peaks raised by fantastic and empty fears, have been theoretical coverings to human insight at its clearest and human love at its purest. Denude the Church's forms and doctrines of their supernaturalism, and for the first time you will find their full significance and beauty. You remove a disguise which concealed the underlying mental and social truths. The chief points of theological contest are therefore now again the centres of interest for the scientific investigator of mind and morals and for the practical statesman who would reconstruct society.

It thus becomes easy for us to understand why the lightnings of controversial wit have flashed incessantly for a thousand years over the communion-table. The illusion that the ethical power of this sacrament was due to the presence of a supernatural agency began early to take possession of men's imaginations. So deep was the sense of intimacy with Jesus Christ which was induced by participation in this rite, so helpful was it in allaying inward temptation and so quickening to enthusiasm for the fellowship of the Church, that already in the second century a belief arose in the actual presence of Christ's body and blood in the bread and wine. Soon the idea grew that in the Communion Service a bloodless sacrifice was each time repeated. In the ninth century it began to be maintained that the bread and wine were actually transformed into the body and blood of Christ. The bread and wine, some thought, ceased to exist except in form, taste and smell ; others thought that the substance remained, while the efficacy and power were changed. In 1215 transubstantiation became an article of faith in the Roman Church ; in 1672 in the Greek. In the thirteenth

session of the Council of Trent, in the sixteenth century, it was declared, "If anyone shall say that in the holy sacrament of the Eucharist there remains the substance of bread and wine, together with the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and shall deny that wonderful and singular conversion of the wine into blood, the species of bread and wine alone remaining, . . . let him be anathema." Luther, less consistently, adopted the doctrine that the substance of the bread and wine continued together with the body and blood of Christ. Calvin declared that, accompanying the rite, a supernatural change took place in the soul of the communicant. No body of Christians has doubted the efficacious presence of a living Christ in some mysterious manner through the Eucharist. The Roman Church believes that Christ is entire in both bread and wine, and that accordingly only one kind need be administered to the laity. Witnesses have testified that they have seen the wafers bleed.

How pitiable these errors of pre-scientific subtlety appear to-day ! How hard to conceive that men should have once supposed the moral personality of Jesus to need any such support, or that the benefits of the Eucharist would be lessened even if the belief in the miraculous action of a Christ still energising fell away ! Happily, this question was one of the few points of philosophical interest in which the Protestant reformers dared to differ from the Church of Rome. The principle underlying their rejection of transubstantiation formed one intellectual stronghold of the Reformation, and has proved an armoury wherein weapons have been forged for the cause of naturalistic religion and of freedom of thought.

On account of the supernaturalistic interpretation of its moral power, the Lord's Supper, as we know it to-day,

has well-nigh ceased to be, in any sense of the word, a means of communion among men. It is inconceivable that there could be any religious rite devised—and undeniably there is no other in existence—from which purely human fellowship and the consciousness of human fellowship are so entirely banished. Those who communicate testify that by this sacrament their spirits are caught up and lifted wholly above all thought of any creature or any love of any creature, and are merged in the supernatural Christ. A person who has never communicated, but looks upon this sacrament with the eyes of an impartial student of religion, is amazed by the incongruity between the name “communion” and the reciprocal isolation of the communicants. Rich and poor, high-born and low, participate together in this form, on the tacit understanding that it commits them to no actual human fellowship. So much is this the case, that the word “communion,” as understood among Roman Catholics, indicates communion only with the Creator, and not with man. So bold also is the recognition of these facts of the case in the Church of England, that often in country parishes all the distinctions of social gradation are carefully preserved throughout this so-called communion. First the squire and his family come to the chancel-rail, then the parson’s wife and family, then the local doctor and the schoolmaster, and so on down the scale to the peasants. It is quite clear that, if there be any sort of communion in such a celebration of the Lord’s Supper, it is not of one human spirit with another in recognition of our common humanity.

If it be argued that the Lord’s Supper never pretended to be a communion of man with man, but only of each individual soul with its Maker and Redeemer, such a defence of it must be met by two irresistible arguments.

Ethically, that God is no God—no true object of human worship and no deliverer from human sin—who can be approached in any other way than through human fellowship and human communion. Not only must one first be reconciled with one's brother, but the only gift which even then one may offer to one's God is the reconciliation achieved. This is the only gift acceptable to a deity worthy of worship. But again, communion presupposes reciprocity and some sort of equality, some form of give-and-take ; whereas the spiritual discipline now practised at the Communion Service is one of absolute surrender of the finite creature to his infinite Creator—is annihilation of individuality, that a superhuman Christ alone may live in each.

If it be retorted that, whether it be right or not to designate it as a communion, the Lord's Supper is the supreme sacrament of the moral life, the rejoinder must again be an ethical one, which of course can appeal only to him that hath ears to hear : the supreme need of man is spiritual communion with man, and the supreme sacrament of ethical religion must be one of human communion.

Furthermore, the highest spiritual ecstasy compatible with individual self-consciousness is that of the spiritual love of equals needing and serving one another. And if one cites, in justification of the present character of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, its awful solemnity, which would be sacrificed if the ritual were to be pervaded with a sense of human fellowship, it must be protested that there is such a thing as an annihilating degree of solemnity, and that this is reached the instant the consciousness of human fellowship is overawed. Whatever obliterates man's selfhood is at enmity with him ; and while the cultivation of that peculiar ecstasy which

one experiences when one surrenders one's moral selfhood to the Infinite may be blissful and may become a habit and a passion, no mortal was ever the better for it, nor any society the manlier or more just or sane.

It is further to be noted that the Lord's Supper is not now an actual meal ; nor has it been since the second century. Had it continued to be a spiritual communion, it would undoubtedly have remained a real occasion for satisfying physical hunger and thirst ; for the dwindling of the meal to a mere vestige of itself has been undoubtedly due to the corresponding fading away of the spirit of equal intercourse. On the other hand, had the rite preserved its character as an actual supper, it would never have ceased to be a quickening symbol of fellowship among Church members. Originally the bread and wine were the actual diet of the people, the everyday food and drink ; and on the occasion when Christ himself instituted the ceremonial, he and his friends were together for the purpose of satisfying hunger and thirst ; they were partaking of their regular evening repast. At the close of this he introduced the ritual act. There was nothing unusual either in the materials selected or in the quantity consumed. The meal was as commonplace in these particulars as an evening repast of bread, cheese and beer would be to-day for British working men, or on a Sunday a midday dinner of roast beef, vegetables and pudding. As a modern instance of a meal almost fully analogous to the Last Supper, one might cite the British institution of a social tea among members of enthusiastic reform movements ; for here an ideal bond unites the communicants, but at the same time they meet to satisfy physical hunger and thirst.

We see, therefore, that originally the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was a human communion and was

part of an ordinary meal. It continued so for a century at least. Indeed, during this period the sacrament came more and more to be interpreted as a continuation of the Passover supper, Jesus Christ himself being regarded as the paschal lamb which had been offered in sacrifice. Now, at the festival of the Passover, in which all the Jews participated, the meal was no mere pretence. According to priestly rule, no more than twenty persons were expected to share one lamb.

In ancient custom, all meals in common partook of the character of a sacrament. Unfortunately, however, there arose soon among the Christians a distinction and then a separation between the Eucharist and the Love-feast. More and more from the Love-feast fell away the ethical and religious symbolism, and with it the ethical and religious spirit, and the dining and the boon companionship became all in all ; while more and more from the Eucharist fell away the feasting and the fellowship, until there was nothing left but the sense of a supernatural agency operating ethically by miracle. Soon the Agape degenerated into excess and revelry, as was natural when the higher meaning was taken away from it. The result is that to-day the Church has no rite which distinctly symbolises the continued loyalty of Church members to one another and to the Church ; and there is no custom among Christians as Christians of sitting down to a common meal together like equals, friends and comrades. A church, to be sure, may have its soup-kitchen for the poor ; but no one could mistake the meal partaken of there for a human communion in devotion to the social ideal.

The Lord's Supper was perfect from the point of view of the meaning and purpose of ritual only so long as it remained an actual meal in common symbolising church fellowship. As I have pointed out in the chapters

on Baptism, the bodily acts which the realism of ritual necessitates must not themselves be an imitation or a sham. Just as the philosophy of ceremonial required that the baptism should be a real washing, so it requires that the repast in the Lord's Supper should be a real meal in common.

It is always so with ritual, as distinct from stage-play. A religion is degenerate when the bodily acts of its ritual are a make-believe. But the form in which the Lord's Supper has survived is doubly degenerate: not only has the symbol shrunk to a mere mock-meal, but the spiritual event now signified is not an event of which a meal is a happy or natural symbol.

When, as with Paul, the reality symbolised is the unity of the living members of the Church, the inward and spiritual meaning is an immediate and ever-present reality, which depends upon no remote event nor upon any supernatural world of redeeming agencies. The spiritual event is the actual blending of the minds and hearts and souls of those present. The thing signified is as independent of belief in supernatural agencies as is the physical effect of the symbolic act itself. Here is the perfection of ritual. There is nothing more mysterious about it than there is in the formal act of signing a cheque and thus transferring £1000 from oneself to another. The signing is a formality, but it is an indispensable condition of the transfer; yet the transfer accompanies it as the reality of the symbol, and is independent of remote events or of miraculous agencies. All that is required is that the signature be real, the cheque an actual draft upon an actual bank, and the signer a possessor of real wealth in that bank. To St Paul, of such nature—although on a different plane—was the Eucharist.

We note, therefore, that since the meal was real and the spiritual fellowship an immediate experience, the fact of its being a memorial was altogether a secondary aspect of the sacrament. The meal was not primarily in memory of another meal, nor the fellowship in memory of another fellowship. Indeed, it is hardly conceivable that a purely memorial ceremony of any kind could ever partake of the essential character of ritual.

Those Christians who have abandoned the supernaturalistic interpretation of the Eucharist unfortunately have not had enough insight to hit upon anything but its memorial aspect as a rational justification for their continuance of the rite. The Unitarians, following Zwingli's explanation of the Lord's Supper, have continued the practice of it simply as a commemoration, with a sham meal and without communion among members. Had those who have largely discarded supernaturalism in religion been as gifted with constructive and synthetic genius as they have been with negative and destructive power, they would, after discarding all other interpretations, have fallen back upon that of St Paul. They would have seen that the abiding reality of the eucharistic meal lay in its function as a church dinner, which it had been and must again become—a dinner to which only members would be admitted and attendance at which would be understood to be a pledge of renewed loyalty.

Here we find the eternal essence of the sacrament of the Eucharist: it is the rite of the renewal of loyalty among church members. As baptism in its function is the rite of initiation, and, in the public mind, marks off the Church from the world outside, so the sacrament of the Lord's Supper impresses upon the imagination of the members themselves their own unity of aim. This rite is as indispensable as that of initiation.

Every society must strike off from its roll of membership the names of those who, after a certain length of time, have ceased to give any sign in proof of their continued interest. Submission to the initiatory rite only proved that the person was at that moment a member ; hence evidence is needed that he is so still. If his name is to be retained and his vital contact is to be preserved, there must be shown at least an irreducible minimum of evidence that his sympathy is still alive. As the elaborateness of the symbol is of no importance, the lifting of a finger once a year might be enough. The slightest sign, if only it be unmistakable, may have untold influence ; such might be the significance of the person making it, that a turn of the head might inspire all the other members of the organisation to heroic self-sacrifice, and might thus lead their cause to victory. "He is still with us," would be the purport of the sign. As a vehicle for conveying such a message, a symbolical act might outweigh in value mightiest deeds of active service and profoundest counsels of statecraft. Thus potent may be one single point of living ritual.

Those Biblical critics have revealed profound psychological insight who have declared that St Paul arrived at his special interpretation of the Eucharist as the symbol of social unity among church members, through the exigencies of his special mission. Paul was an organiser of societies, and as such he soon learnt how easily a new group of enthusiasts disintegrates under the discouragement of the first adversity, if there be not some form or ceremony that, as it were, renews the first pledge and reveals the unity of the members to themselves. During periods of great prosperity and of flattering recognition, a group may possibly be able to dispense with any rite of continuance of loyalty. But when adversity arises, when the members can do nothing but wait—at

such times societies of every description are liable to collapse altogether. It is through the exigencies of such periods of discouragement and enforced inactivity that an experienced organiser discovers the necessity of resorting to symbolical figurements, which shall bring home to the minds of the members the ends and the life they have in common. Such figurements reinforce the life by making the invisible ends vivid and beautiful. The ritualistic act stimulates the imagination, lifting it above the transitory crisis. It keeps the flame of hope burning, it enkindles the love of comrades, which in turn fires the idealistic enthusiasm of all. In this way periods of idleness and despair are utilised : they are transformed into epochs of worship and inner discipline, during which the characters of the members are being welded together and moulded into shape, against the coming hour of action.

But a society like the Church, even in periods of greatest immediate activity, can never be wholly engrossed in outward enterprises. As her final aim, although social, is inward and rational, instead of external and material, she must be always relatively in a state of waiting. The triumph of her principles in the hearts of men has never been so near full attainment as to justify quiescence and security. She, therefore, more than political or other organisations, has need of ceremonial acts through which to teach and preach her universal, invisible ideals, and thus to unite her members together.

If we remember that the Church is primarily an educational institution, we shall again see that she pre-eminently is compelled to resort to ritualistic embodiments of her ideals. All teaching of principles is by signs, more or less arbitrary ; all systematic instruction and inspiration are through visualisations invented by the teacher. The new theories of education give their entire sanction

to symbolical illustration. In proportion as the methods of the teacher become psychological and not simply mechanical, sympathetic towards the pupil and not ruthless and inconsiderate of his individuality, in that proportion they are in accord with the philosophy of ritual. Now, the Church being the national school for adults, its object is to build up in the souls of the people regulative principles, inspiring ideas, social vistas and visions. When the Church does this, she supplies the nation with the spiritual power from which will evolve higher economies and liberties, new health, beauty and fullness of life.

It is the Church's character as ethical educator which justifies her in giving more attention to ritual than need be given by any other organisation. The Church is the nation, in so far as the nation is the standard-bearer of human ideals ; and as a champion of principles she can only stammer out her message incoherently, unless she resorts to artistic expression.

When we come to consider what rite will most appropriately symbolise their unity to the members of a society, we need not reason from abstract principles. Hundreds of organisations have tried hundreds of experiments as means of perpetuating and strengthening the sense of comradeship. Among these experiments, one has been so eminently and generally successful as to prove itself a symbol natural to the human mind ; it is none other than that of which we have been speaking—a meal in common at frequent intervals.

It is almost as essential to the life of a social group of friends that its members shall partake regularly of a meal in common, as to the life of each member that he shall regularly sustain his own body by food. It is hard to conceive what the common life of a family would be, if the members never sat down to meals together.

We are liable to forget that the home is in great part a natural consequence of the ritualistic institutions called family breakfast, dinner and supper. Here the meal is the symbol of the unity of the group, as the Lord's Supper was to Paul of the unity of the Church. It is interesting to note in this connection that wise innovators, wishing to reform the family, but not to expose it to disintegration, while quite ready to abolish the domestic kitchen, the separate house, and many other customary accessories of ordinary home life, insist that the members of each family must at least continue the practice of meeting to break bread together. Historians of the French Revolution bear testimony to the socially cohesive effect of common meals by tracing its outbreak in great part to the social converse which the life in the cafés of Paris made possible. A great German socialist maintains that one of the conditions without which the perfect organisation of the Social-Democratic Party would have been impossible, has been the restaurant life in the beer-gardens of the Fatherland. Except for this, the working people could never have become sufficiently intimate either to trust or to love one another ; they could not have been reinforced in their economic convictions and hopes, nor could they have learned to express articulately the emotions they felt. This same social-democratic statesman goes so far as to attribute, in very large part, the inability of the working people of England to organise in like manner, to the total absence among the British workmen of anything like German or French opportunities of social converse. The English public-house, their only meeting-place—with its lack of opportunity for a meal in common—is one proof of the degradation and isolation into which the units of the masses have been driven.

This question, therefore, of meals in common is one which involves far-reaching and deep-lying issues. It is one which is gaining the attention of reformers, and pre-eminently of women. Possibly it will be found once more that a meal in common is to be the germ out of which shall grow the new order of a more humane society.

So potent is the mental effect of meals in common in binding persons into reciprocal loyalty and creating the sense that the honour of all is involved in the honour of each, that we often find persons persistently faithful to one another when there is no other bond of attachment between them except the sense of identity which springs out of the practice of sitting about the same table. On the other hand, were there ever friends who did not wish to eat together? And have persons, for any reason, often eaten voluntarily at one board and not grown involuntarily attached to one another? This effect is not inexplicable; and it seems inevitable, when we consider what opportunity the common meal gives for intimacy of acquaintance. It offers almost the only regular opportunity in life for personal interchange of haphazard sentiments. It gives a chance for points of congeniality to betray themselves. Especially at meal-time the individuality of the shyest character will unexpectedly make bold to come out of its hiding-place; and revelations of individuality as such are always attractive and arouse tenderness and deference.

It must, therefore, be remembered that when a man partakes of a meal with others, more effects and of another order are produced upon him than the satisfying of his hunger and thirst. Even without his knowing it, his will and emotions are being stimulated in specific directions. His mind as well as his body is being fed; he is assimilating spiritual substance of a definite kind. It

is for this reason that the simple-minded should beware with whom they eat. Every worldly politician, from Machiavelli to Bismarck, would advise the intriguer: "Invite to dinner the man whom you mean to corrupt." The simplicity characteristic of a truly ethical diplomacy would forbid us to say to one who would be a saviour of men, "Invite to dinner the man whom you wish to save"; but, nevertheless, the ethical statesman may and does say, and always has said, with an insight as harmless as it is wise, "When a man has begun to share with you your love of righteousness, share with him also your bread as often as you can." The common meal among those bound together in devotion to goodness multiplies many times the goodness of each. And the greater the number of those who participate, and the more frequent the repetition of the meal, the greater the psychological effect.

If the common meal of itself be psychologically potent even where there is no spiritual bond to begin with, how much more powerful does it become when devotion to a common idea has been the principle of selection upon which the participants were chosen! It is only when enthusiasm for a given idea is the passport of eligibility to a dinner, that the dinner becomes in the full sense a symbol of spiritual fellowship and reacts in the highest degree as a cohesive force.

The ideal which acts as the magnet need not be a noble one in order to be powerful. Consider the banquets to which the rich invite one another. Their common interest may be only devotion to the god Gold; but the feast thereby becomes a ritual in acknowledgment of the value of wealth, and is a mighty force cementing class-interest and strengthening class-pride. If the rich, outside of family life, never shared a meal in common,

it is possible that the clashes of competition and vanity would induce isolation among their units ; it is the social life induced by their dinners and other such ceremonies which fosters class-consciousness. Dinners among the devotees of art or literature in like manner create an æsthetic club ; the club becomes a school, and the school engenders an atmosphere which gives tone to the life of everyone who breathes it.

The most accurate test of class aloofness among the people of the same nation is difference of table manners and customs. In the interests of national unity these differences must be removed. Some day all social meals will be sacraments of spiritual fellowship. As the democratic spirit penetrates the religious organisations of Christianity, the prevalent feasting of the rich together, the exclusive banquets of those of the same æsthetic tastes, and even merely family repasts, will be branded as symbols of pride or prejudice, and as a desecration of an institution which ought to typify the fellowship of all humanity. The unwillingness of those high in the social scale to eat with those below is the measure of their inhumanity. On the other hand, the uncomfortable sense among the working people of not being at home at the tables of the rich will be used as a gauge of the forces of social disruption. In the meantime, there are humanistic influences at work towards the transformation of all meals into the likeness of the Lord's Supper as it existed in the beginning.

It is not unreasonable to hope that these tendencies will affect the sacrament of the Eucharist itself, and so operate upon it as to bring it back to its pristine meaning and virility. The proposal seems at first startling, that all the members of each church congregation should have a meal together often enough to bring about personal

intimacy and create a sense of social solidarity ; but, although powerful prejudices and strong habits stand in the way of realising it, it is conceivable that active humanistic propaganda during one or two generations might remove these difficulties.

There are, however, other obstacles to be overcome ; the question of practical arrangements, for one thing, is by no means easy to solve. Where could such church dinners be held ? There are no kitchens and dining-rooms at the disposal of the churches. This problem can scarcely be counted one of immediate urgency in ecclesiastical politics ; but the imagination easily leaps the bounds of our uninteresting times, and I have been unable to refrain from picturing to myself the churches themselves, now so gloomily empty for the major portion of the week, filled at least one evening in every seven by communicants taking their evening meal together. Every member of a church must have a meal somewhere : why not once a week make of it an idealistic communion ? There may be cases where the number of communicants could not be seated in the church's space at a common board. Then, on two evenings in the week—or six if need be—the church building might be transformed from an empty, sepulchre-like monument into a home of fraternal cheer. The beautiful appropriateness of the church buildings as banqueting-halls would also be in favour of such a use of them. We hear much of the heaven-aspiring Gothic, suggestive in its vague mystery of the infinite above us ; but it only needs an adequate illumination of every line of arch and vault to convert the Gothic into a perfect symbol of human tenderness and hope.

This suggestion of the church dinner may prove a valuable hint to those whose supreme interest is to lead the Church gently forward from supernaturalism into

humanism. Two centuries of mere argument and of logical appeal to experience as the final test of truth, have failed to move the churches to an abandonment of their transcendental formularies ; and the sacrament of the Eucharist is still the most complete embodiment of their intellectual error. But it is quite possible that an approach from another direction would achieve what logic has failed to do. An attempt to convert the Lord's Supper into a real meal and into an actual communion might occasion an almost unconscious abandonment of the trust in intelligent agencies outside of human society. The Church's supreme sacrament, thus reformed, might prove the magnet by which the Church is to be drawn out of its barren metaphysics and into the sphere of humane science.

As a warning against the proposal to transform the Lord's Supper into an ordinary meal as regards what is eaten and the amount to be taken, will be cited the fact that the Church herself in the first centuries was compelled to discourage and finally to abandon the Agapæ, because they deteriorated into occasions of gluttony and revelry. But it must be remembered that this would never have happened had not the purport of a meal as a symbol of the unity of the Church been reserved exclusively for a purely ceremonial occasion. It was the differentiation between the eucharistic meal and the Love-feast which caused the latter to degenerate. Nor must the rebuke of St Paul to the Corinthian Church be misunderstood as discouraging fellowship and the providing of an ordinary meal. He only insists upon orderliness, and protests against unseemly scrambling and greediness by persons who forgot the dignity of the occasion. The fact, moreover, that in his time the communicants were almost wholly of the humblest classes of the community

may have rendered impossible a fellowship which to-day would be in no danger of excess or laxity.

If the fear be expressed that the provision of an ordinary meal would occasion hypocrisy by alluring those who, although not spiritual members of the Church, would come for the sake of the meal, what a commentary we have here upon the economic inhumanity of our modern life ! And, all things considered, it would seem that the Church would be better fulfilling her professed aim by even thus attracting the poor than by letting them go hungry for fear of risking the presence of a few pretenders.

My interpretation of the Lord's Supper as a real meal in common, to celebrate the unity among church members, is not original on my part, although, so far as I am aware, no one has before proposed to reform the ritual so that its real nature should be restored and become apparent to everyone. The same explanation of it is expressed fully and with astonishing boldness in Sir John Seeley's *Ecce Homo*. That the extent of my debt to him may be realised, I quote the following paragraphs from his chapter entitled "The Lord's Supper" :—

That Christ had but a slight esteem for rites and ceremonies may be argued negatively from his establishing so few, and positively from the contempt he poured on the traditional formalities prized so highly by the Scribes and Pharisees. But he well understood their use, and we have already observed with what rigorous firmness he insisted on his followers submitting to the initiatory rite of baptism. The kingdom he was founding was to be everywhere *imperium in imperio* ; its members were to be at the same time members of secular states and national bodies. It was therefore a matter of extreme importance to preserve the distinctness of the Christian Society and to prevent its members from being drawn apart from each other by the distractions of worldly claims and engagements. For this purpose certain *sacraments* or solemn observances renewing

and reminding them of their union were most desirable, and Christ ordained two, the one expressing the distinctness of the Church from the world, and the other the unity of the Church within itself. Of the former, Baptism, mention was made when we considered Christ's Call; concerning the latter, the Common Supper or *συσσίτιον* of Christians, it is convenient to say something now.

A common meal is the most natural and universal way of expressing, maintaining, and as it were ratifying relations of friendship. The spirit of antiquity regarded the meals of human beings as having the nature of sacred rites (*sacra mensæ*). If, therefore, it sounds degrading to compare the Christian Communion to a club-dinner, this is not owing to any essential difference between the two things, but to the fact that the moderns connect less dignified associations with meals than the ancients did, and that most clubs have a far less serious object than the Christian Society. The Christian Communion *is* a club-dinner: but the club is the New Jerusalem; God and Christ are members of it; death makes no vacancy in its lists, but at its banquet-table the perfected spirits of just men, with an innumerable company of angels, sit down beside those who have not yet surrendered their bodies to the grave.

Although the sacrament of the Eucharist has been so vitiated by the Church's error of supernaturalism as to have lost for the common eye every vestige of likeness to a club-dinner, or any other kind of dinner, so that it required the genius of a Seeley to uncover its real nature, still his interpretation, once presented, becomes incontrovertible. The Church would be returning, as it has often done along other lines, to primitive custom, were it to convert the Eucharist into a club-dinner. But should the prejudice of public opinion refuse to admit such reform, that would be no reason why the Church should not now, to meet the exigencies of its present mission, establish real church-dinners. Their function in the economy of its work, their ritualistic character and

meaning, would operate fully, although not one in a thousand participants detected their identity with the original institution as it existed in the Apostles' time.

Furthermore, societies which are springing up quite devoid of supernaturalism and yet in devotion to the same ethical ends as those of the Church, if they are directed by far-seeing organisers, will certainly establish besides a rite of initiation another for the deepening of fellowship among members. And this second rite will inevitably consist of a meal in common. A simple repast as a symbol of fellowship in such a society would never for a moment, in the present state of public opinion concerning the nature of the Lord's Supper, be charged with being an imitation of the sacrament of the Eucharist. So absolutely do both the present form and the prevalent interpretation of the Eucharist obscure its psychological functions, that an ethical-fellowship dinner would not suffer the contempt which merely servile imitation of older forms deservedly arouses. Thus, even in Christian countries, men could do again what—from the point of view of establishing a ritual for the deepening of fellowship—would be in exact analogy with early church practice, and yet not stir up prejudices.

I have said that if new ethical organisations are to spring up, they will inevitably adopt as the ritual of fellowship a meal in common ; but perhaps the assertion is too unqualified. It is not absolutely necessary that the sign chosen should be the one most perfectly embodying by analogy the meaning to be conveyed. And it is at least conceivable that in a universal church some other sign might serve to indicate the unity among members better or more conveniently than a meal. A meeting at regular intervals might be established, to which only members would be admitted, and the coming to which

would be understood to signify a renewal of loyalty. It might be required only that every person in such a meeting should shake hands with every other. But, indeed, even this formality could be dispensed with, if it were ordered that everyone present should speak personally with everyone else. After all, it is this word-to-word and eye-to-eye meeting of member with member which is essential as a means of developing deference for individuality and the attachment of comradeship. It would seem, indeed, that even if there were a common meal, some such arrangement as the speaking of each with each would need to be established, in order to prevent divisions of those present at the same table into groups which held one another in contempt or envy.

I began this analysis by stating that in the Communion Service were to be found Christian thought and life not only at their worst but also at their best. Despite its degeneracy as ritual, and despite its being honeycombed with supernaturalism, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is even to-day the most wisely ethical rite in existence among men.

For, whatever else it is or is not, it stands unique as the only rite the preliminary invitation to which contains a challenge that no person shall participate who has not repented of his wrong-doing and is not in love and charity with his neighbours. When one considers the long ages in which correctness of intellectual creed has been practically the only test of church membership, one wonders that this invitation should not have been modified so as to exclude not the evil-doer and the hater of his neighbour, but the unorthodox thinker, the heretic. No such degenerate tendency, however, has been incorporated. From the days of the Epistles and the Acts until now the Eucharist has been uncontaminated by the dogmatic

bigotry of heresy-hunters. To be sure, the ethical invitation is couched in the language of ordinary theology ; but the emphatic pre-eminence which it gives to purely moral conditions of eligibility to participate is beyond dispute.

In the Church of England Communion Service, the preliminary invitation and announcement by the priest (a part of which I have in an earlier chapter adapted for the exordium of a proposed initiation service) reads thus :—

Dearly beloved, on . . . day next I purpose, through God's assistance, to administer to all such as shall be religiously and devoutly disposed the most comfortable Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ ; to be by them received in remembrance of his meritorious Cross and Passion ; whereby alone we obtain remission of our sins, and are made partakers of the Kingdom of heaven. Wherefore it is our duty to render most humble and hearty thanks to Almighty God our heavenly Father, for that he hath given his Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, not only to die for us, but also to be our spiritual food and sustenance in that holy Sacrament. Which being so divine and comfortable a thing to them who receive it worthily, and so dangerous to them that will presume to receive it unworthily ; my duty is to exhort you in the mean season to consider the dignity of that holy mystery, and the great peril of the unworthy receiving thereof ; and so to search and examine your own consciences, (and that not lightly, and after the manner of dissemblers with God ; but so) that ye may come holy and clean to such a heavenly Feast, in the marriage-garment required by God in holy Scripture, and be received as worthy partakers of that holy Table.

The way and means thereto is ; First, to examine your lives and conversations by the rule of God's commandments ; and whereinsoever ye shall perceive yourselves to have offended, either by will, word, or deed, there to bewail your own sinfulness, and to confess yourselves to Almighty God, with full purpose of amendment of life. And if ye shall

perceive your offences to be such as are not only against God, but also against your neighbours ; then ye shall reconcile yourselves unto them ; being ready to make restitution and satisfaction, according to the uttermost of your powers, for all injuries and wrongs done by you to any other ; and being likewise ready to forgive others that have offended you, as ye would have forgiveness of your offences at God's hand : for otherwise the receiving of the holy Communion doth nothing else but increase your damnation. Therefore if any of you be a blasphemer of God, an hinderer or slanderer of his Word, an adulterer, or be in malice, or envy, or in any other grievous crime, repent you of your sins, or else come not to that holy Table ; lest, after the taking of that holy Sacrament, the devil enter into you, as he entered into Judas, and fill you full of all iniquities, and bring you to destruction both of body and soul.

And because it is requisite, that no man should come to the holy Communion, but with a full trust in God's mercy, and with a quiet conscience ; therefore if there be any of you, who by this means cannot quiet his own conscience herein, but requireth further comfort or counsel, let him come to me, or to some other discreet and learned Minister of God's Word, and open his grief ; that by the ministry of God's holy Word he may receive the benefit of absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice, to the quieting of his conscience, and avoiding of all scruple and doubtfulness.

The same condition of eligibility to participate is again emphasised in the invitation at the time of the celebration of the Communion. One passage in this invitation is painfully and unnecessarily gruesome—that where it is said that in the sacrament we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ and drink his blood. Another passage is so naïve as to lower the dignity of even the most solemn sacrament : the intending participants are threatened that, if they do not come to the communion-table with a pure heart, they may provoke God to plague them with divers diseases and

sundry kinds of death. The first half of this invitation reads as follows :—

Dearly beloved in the Lord, ye that mind to come to the holy Communion of the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ, must consider how Saint Paul exhorteth all persons diligently to try and examine themselves, before they presume to eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup. For as the benefit is great, if with a true penitent heart and lively faith we receive that holy Sacrament ; (for then we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood ; then we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us ; we are one with Christ, and Christ with us ;) so is the danger great, if we receive the same unworthily. For then we are guilty of the Body and Blood of Christ our Saviour ; we eat and drink our own damnation, not considering the Lord's Body ; we kindle God's wrath against us ; we provoke him to plague us with divers diseases, and sundry kinds of death. Judge therefore yourselves, brethren, that ye be not judged of the Lord ; repent you truly for your sins past ; have a lively and stedfast faith in Christ our Saviour ; amend your lives, and be in perfect charity with all men ; so shall ye be meet partakers of those holy mysteries.

Then later are said, to those who intend to receive the Holy Communion, these words :—

Ye that do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways ; Draw near with faith, and take this holy Sacrament to your comfort ; and make your humble confession to Almighty God, meekly kneeling upon your knees.

This condition to which the participants are enjoined to submit is the primary secret of the moral power at the heart of the Anglican Eucharist. To think that only those in a congregation who had made their peace with conscience and with their neighbours should be invited to

join in any sort of a ceremony whatsoever ! No matter what the bodily acts and words of the ceremony itself, its power would be drawn from the preliminary condition. What a challenge to examine one's own heart aright ! What a call to make amends for all wrongs done to anyone ! What were better fitted to concentrate the whole thought and character of every person present upon the necessity of brotherly love and of making restitution for past injustice ? It is true that utterly depraved natures, persons given over to lying and hypocrisy, might not be stopped, even by the announcement of this condition, from participating unworthily. But happily such extreme depravity is rare, and upon all except such natures the summons to the communion table could have none but the effect which it was meant to have.

We must not forget that the invitation exercises an influence salutary and redemptive upon those who for conscience' sake abstain from participating, as well as upon those who are not excluded by intellectual disagreements. Again, it is quite possible, as the challenge is one wholly to self-judgment, that the man who decides that he is morally unworthy is by that self-condemnation more benefited in character than many who discover in themselves no obstacle.

One cannot read the passages which I have quoted without seeing how easy it would be to discard from them every spiritistic implication, and even, if necessary, every reference to the particular events in the life of Christ, thus removing the transient elements and the local colouring, and thus to universalise the invitation so that it would be as acceptable to persons of Jewish or Japanese as of Christian antecedents. The principle that a man should repent of his wrong-doings and be reconciled to his neighbours by making restitution for wrong done, is

by no means peculiar to the Christian tradition ; and it is regrettable that there should not now be some sort of a ceremony thus premised, which should contain no adventitious stumbling-blocks to any good man of any nation.

But even as it is, on account of this preliminary exhortation, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper must be ranked in ethical influence with the institution of the Jewish Sabbath or the Christian Sunday. Although operating upon a much narrower circle and producing a different order of effects, it has indirectly been of equal benefit. More than any other cause, it has given depth, intensity, concentration and insight to the Church, so far as the Church has possessed these qualities. No invention of human statesmanship is more wonderful in ingenuity, in simplicity, in ease of operation, and in abundance and far-reachingness of beneficent issues.

There is, however, in the rite of the Anglican Eucharist another feature of supreme ethical utility besides the preliminary invitation. It is one which has no mystery about it, and which has never been interpreted as due in any way to the operation of a supernatural agency. I refer to the public commitment on the side of moral goodness which every participant makes in rising and coming forward to partake of the bread and wine. This public act of commitment need not assume the formal aspect of drawing near to the chancel, as in the Church of England. In Nonconformist bodies it is customary for those who do not intend to take part in the sacrament to leave the church, and for those who remain to come together in the front seats. Even the mere being seen to remain to the communion service is itself a public commitment. Were the communion rite to consist of the coming forward to the front of the church, were there

to be no ceremony involving bread and wine, or any memorial or any fulfilment of any request of the Founder of Christianity, the act symbolising unity among church members would still be awful in its sublimity ; for there is nothing so impressive as a public commitment to fellowship in the principles of the moral life.

It is often maintained by enemies of the Christian Church that ethical interests and ends hold a very subordinate place in its doctrine, and that its scheme of salvation is not one of moral redemption, but, as it were, of ceremonial cleansing and propitiatory appeasement of non-ethical agencies. And indeed there are not lacking champions of the Church who delight in pointing out that it is something altogether different from a mere ethical society. Be this as it may, the fact is incontrovertible that no organisation except the Church has established any institution approaching even remotely the sacrament of the Eucharist in ethical purpose and in the shrewd naturalism of its means for achieving an ethical end. There have recently sprung into existence organisations distinctively naming themselves ethical societies ; yet there is not one of these which holds a meeting to which only those are invited who feel themselves at peace with their conscience and their neighbours. Many of these societies declare that the good life is of supreme worth to humanity ; yet they seem scarcely to have had the courage of their convictions, or else they have lacked the constructive genius to find out the simplest and most natural means of building up a fellowship in devotion to the moral life. One might presuppose that organisations consciously discarding all communion with supernatural agencies would have turned with the ingenuity of enthusiasm to find equivalents, or more than equivalents, for the Church's means of ethical culture. But it would seem

that persons who break away from old forms, exhaust much of their spiritual constructiveness in so doing, and are consequently feeble in the invention of new means. It would seem that constructive work in religious fellowship is never undertaken except when ethical passion has reached the blazing-point of apostolic fervour. But until ethical societies, distinctively so called, do devise as good means of spiritual culture as the Church has done, it will be well for them to remember, with Sir John Seeley, that the Church itself was the first ethical society. It was, no doubt, committed to the intellectual error of tracing moral redemption to superhuman agencies ; hence the good in it has been in so far vitiated for the modern scientific spirit ; but, luckily, in the formularies of the supreme sacrament there is no requirement of assent to an intellectual creed, nor is the doctrine of transubstantiation or consubstantiation, or any other metaphysical theory, actually embodied in them. Everything that is said, if it may be interpreted according to the canons of literary and historical criticism, is either a plain statement or a poetic embodiment of ethical experience.

It is possible that the organisers of the Church's ritual were prepared to present so purely ethical a sacrament only because they had entrenched their intellectual dogmas in the baptismal and confirmatory rites, and in the Catechism ; but the fact that they did so is none the less a happy augury.

Those who believe, as I do, in the ethical efficacy of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, cannot but deplore the fact that, before one can participate in it, one must submit to the present formularies of the ordinance of baptism. That ordinance is supposed to commit one to belief in the conventional interpretation of the Apostles' Creed, and to bind one intellectually and morally to belief

and trust in superhuman sources of redemption. Anyone, therefore, who counts such belief and trust as lamentable errors, is for conscience' sake self-excluded from the communion table. Yet that he should be forced into this predicament is a spiritual injustice ; and the arrogance of the supernaturalists in claiming a monopoly in church membership will some day be actively resented by the best men and women in the nation. Nor will these be content simply to found new ethical organisations, disconnected from those of the past ; they will storm the historical Church, until they beat down its barriers of supernaturalism ; and the Church itself will then be glad to make room for them at its fellowship supper.

For no sect elect
Is the soul's wine poured
And her table decked :
Whom should man reject
From man's common board ?

CHAPTER XIV

THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY

THE Church still regards herself as a restraining influence upon the wayward and excessive impulses of human nature. And there is no doubt that in the past she has for the most part been a power on the side not only of conventional law and order, but of those customs which are of real service to human society.

In former generations, in order to throw her weight into the scale in favour of health and innocent happiness, she needed only to uphold her own doctrines, forms and ceremonies. But the time has now come when those very doctrines are in many points antiquated, and, instead of furthering, are a hindrance to the cause of social purity and innocence. Her form for the solemnisation of marriage, like her Burial Service, bears every mark of an age more external and mechanical, less spiritual and sympathetic, than ours.

The marriage ceremony is itself to a considerable extent accountable for the confusion of thought which prevails to-day as to the meaning and importance of the institution of matrimony. Whoever, therefore, among the upholders of the Church is filled with her deeper spirit and insight and adheres to her ultimate end of social purity and justice, must in the very name of the Church discard her present marriage form.

Yet to-day, more than ever before, there is a jealous insistence upon the inviolability of the Prayer Book—both its teaching and its letter; and if any revision is immediately undertaken, there is danger that it may be only in the direction of fortifying and intensifying those very characteristics that are out of harmony with the new spirit and the deeper needs of modern life. If tendencies develop as they have begun of late, the clergy of the Church, for the sake of the Prayer Book, will be found defending comparative brutality and laxity in private morals, while the boldest and most self-reliant thinkers of the day, the independent humanitarian reformers who have broken away from the Church, will become the acknowledged pioneers of a more rigid marriage order, of severer laws against waywardness and self-indulgence, and the upholders of a higher standard of personal virtue.

It is a most significant fact that within the last few years bold and independent criticism of social and religious institutions has made a new departure—a right-about-face—as regards its task and policy. Until recently its work had been negative, fault-finding, destructive—if not picking new holes, pointing to those that were there all the time but had been overlooked. Work of this sort has been so far accomplished—there is now such a strong and alert public opinion against errors and barriers which impede health, science and opportunity for a fuller life—that the hitherto destructive critics have felt justified and emboldened to start the work of building anew the institutions which shall replace the old and perform their service better.

This transformation from a destructive to a constructive policy is especially marked in regard to the change of attitude of critics towards the institution of marriage. For many years the effect of pointing out

the anomalies and inhumanities which are harboured and sanctioned by the traditional views of the Church and by the laws of the country was to cast the whole institution of monogamy into discredit. During the last generation the sentiment spread throughout widening circles of society that marriage was a thing not to be reformed but to be swept away ; that it was a mere conventionality, upheld in the interests not of virtue but of hypocrisy, and that a conspiracy of silence hushed up the crying wrongs which were perpetrated within the institution and under the sanction of religion. But now the defiant critics of marriage as it is, are also the most powerful and outspoken champions of monogamy ; they would make it more rigid. They totally reject the notion that the relation of man and woman is a merely private affair ; they maintain that it above all others is the relationship in life in which the community as an organised whole—the State—may interfere. A hundred practices which have been approved, condoned and tolerated, they declare, must now be suppressed as illegal by means of punishments attached, and many evils still rife must be anticipated and prevented by systematic and timely instruction. They declare further that many aspects of a man's life which he has been allowed to account private must henceforth be recorded, through the medical profession, lawyers and others, under State authorities, and that access to these records must be given to such persons as they may vitally concern. These agitators declare that in order to prevent the mental and physical degeneration of the people, the hidden things of darkness must be brought to light. The facts are accessible ; those who can record them are already in possession of them and can be constrained to communicate them to the central authorities.

This question, therefore, of the reform by the State

Church of its marriage ceremony is only part of the larger issue of reforming marriage itself, so that as an institution it shall fulfil the ends for which every civilised nation has established it.

But while the reform of the marriage ceremony is but a part of a vaster change, it is by no means insignificant.

Many persons do not yet realise that if there be no marriage ceremony, there can be no marriage. They accordingly speak slightly, if not sneeringly and bitterly, against any formal rite of initiation into matrimony, as if somehow such a rite, instead of serving, was adverse to the institution itself. But here, alas! we have one more proof that the misuse of a thing not only casts discredit upon the use, but blinds people to its true purpose. The defects of the present ceremony are so glaring, not to say insulting to our better nature, and so adverse to the conscious needs of our day, that many have jumped to the conclusion that it were better to have no ceremony at all. They do not see that where there is no ceremony there is no marriage.

The truth of this dictum will become the more manifest if, instead of the word "ceremony," I should use the word "sign" or "symbol." If there is no act or word chosen by the community to be the sign or symbol that a man and woman are married, then, it must be quite evident, there is in that community no marriage. Persons who fail to see the indispensability of a voluntarily chosen sign or symbol as the mark or note of marriage must have failed to grasp altogether what the essence of marriage is. It is argued that the mere living together in intimate union of a man and woman, especially if they live for years together, constitutes marriage; but if this is so in any community, it is only because that community has an understanding that the living together of a man

and woman for a certain length of time shall be the sign or symbol of matrimony, and then the whole community will look upon that couple as married and will treat them accordingly. A community in which there was no recognition of any sign would be in the position of aggregations of the lower animals. There may be fixed habits prevailing in the relation of the sexes in many species of lower animals ; but we have no reason to believe that there is any social polity in authority over the individual members enforced by public opinion, and so we cannot with exactitude speak of marriage among them. The essence of marriage is the social sanction which the community gives to the living together of man and woman. Where there is no social sanction there is no marriage ; where there is no sign there is no social sanction. Any sign, the most meagre, is a ceremony in rudiment. Suppose that, by common agreement, the mere fact that a man and woman are known to have lived together for a certain length of time constitutes marriage ; then the man who does not wish to be bound by social sanction to any such relationship will instantly take the greatest pains that nobody shall know of such a union. He will avoid the making of the public sign, in order to escape the responsibilities which must follow from social recognition of the union.

The social sanction cannot fail to impose obligations, for there are no tribes above the lowest who do not lay down some limitations as to what they approve in the relation of the sexes, some customs they condemn and others they permit.

The choosing of a symbol gives to the act which is used as a sign a new significance and fresh consequences. That act, over and above its own specific nature, now assumes the potencies of ritual. It is accordingly preposterous to

believe in marriage and yet speak slightly of a formal entrance into it. In condemning any one ceremony, therefore, the greatest care should be taken not to condemn marriage ceremonies altogether. Any one sign should be condemned by the champions of marriage only that a more adequate and effective symbol may replace it. A symbol may do untold mischief if it perverts or obscures the character of the relationship to be sanctioned ; a defective ceremony, therefore, not only does mischief itself, but it blocks the way so long as it exists, preventing the introduction of a symbol which might reinforce and establish the institution in the reason, conscience and heart of all members of the community. The Church's marriage ceremony is the nation's supreme opportunity of instructing and inspiring people, at the most impressionable moment in their whole lives, as to a high ideal of the relation of the sexes and the social significance of the love of man and woman. Not only Churchmen but all citizens have, therefore, a natural interest, in addition to their legal right, in insisting upon the transformation of this Church rite into an instrument for the moral elevation of the people.

If it be said that, because a civil form is at their option, no one is constrained to submit to the marriage rite of the Church, it must be answered that the civil form in another way, if not so offensively, is imperfect. It contains no false or perverse sentiments or implications, but only because it is not inspired by sentiment at all ; and this is a deficiency wholly out of harmony with the spirit and intention of marriage. In retort, it might be urged that persons who are so anxious to have a new and adequate ceremony, instead of tampering with the present Church ritual, should labour to transfuse the civil rite with the new sentiments and make it an embodiment of

the ideas to be inculcated. But the reply must be that, since both the civil rite and the Church rite are authoritative instruments of the nation's sovereign will, each must be brought into harmony with the ideal which the nation is interested to set before the people. So the Church cannot escape the revision of its forms ; and, when its marriage ceremony is what it should be, possibly there will be no occasion for a separate civil rite.

Let us turn, then, to the Church's form of solemnisation of matrimony, and see how far it meets the requirements of the purpose it was devised to serve. We notice at the end of the ceremony quotations from St Peter and St Paul, which, in case there be no sermon declaring the duties of man and wife, the minister must read. The first quotation from St Paul begins thus : "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the Word ; that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing ; but that it should be holy, and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies."

These words were presumably meant by St Paul to be high and holy ; but never was couched in seemly phrase a more insulting assignment of woman to a place of moral and spiritual inferiority to man. As if the man dare for an instant assume, from the point of view of the inner authority of conscience, the office which Christ is presented as holding towards the Church—its inspirer, the originator and quickener of its inner life ! It may not be invidious in and of itself to compare woman with the Church ; but to trace to the husband the spiritual life which animates the wife is so grotesque that it is difficult to feel the resentment it deserves. Whatever their

superiority of bodily strength and of mental calibre, men know perfectly well that the higher life of self-sacrificing devotion to others, purity of imagination, moral originality and quickening power, if it come predominantly from either side, emanates on the whole rather from the woman than the man. What, then, is this talk and implication that as Christ quickens the Church with the washing of water in order that he might present to himself a glorious Church, holy and without blemish, so the husband ought to love his wife? And why should the woman be put in this analogy as an object to be loved by the man as he loves his own body? The insinuation from beginning to end here is that the life of the spirit is the man's, and becomes the woman's only as he communicates it. In the time of St Paul, so brutal and sensual may have been his age that it perhaps was an excusable blindness on his part to have penetrated no further into the spiritual personality of woman than was the custom of his day. But for women to-day without a protest to allow this indignity to continue—when it is an open secret that the private lives of most men cannot compare for self-control and stainlessness with those of most women—is to obscure the moral triumph which womanhood has achieved. So far as their influence upon public opinion and legislation can bring it about, this old-fashioned masculine egoism should no longer be permitted to parade itself; for it will not be denied that the best men of our day have totally outgrown the pretension of any innate spiritual superiority to women. Yet it will be the very men who are still on the plane of brutal self-assertion who will gladly hear it from the lips of the priest that they are to women as the spirit is to the body.

Another passage from St Paul which the priest, in lieu of a sermon, is enjoined to read, runs thus: "Wives,

submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church : and he is the Saviour of the body. Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing." These words, in their brutal insolence, must have worked nothing less than infinite mischief ; they have gratified the vanity and love of authority in men and tended to crush out women's inward dignity and selfhood.

The one thing which no really good wife ever will do, is to submit herself unto her husband *as unto the Lord*. The only Lord to which she shall submit is in her own spirit. She will yield to the husband only under Conscience—and that her own. She will yield to him only as to an equal, as he himself shall yield in turn. It is a shame that, long after the custom of capturing the wife with a blow that rendered her senseless had become obsolete, the husband, with the priest's aid, should attempt to strike at her soul, and then look upon her as his body. No good woman should ever judge her husband to be her head *as Christ is the head of the Church*. When we remember that men at the best are no better than women, it sounds like blasphemy against woman—if not against Christ—that she should be told that the husband is to her as Christ to the Church, and that the husband is the saviour of the body. Probably the general sentiment is correct in feeling that if one more than the other be the saviour of the body it is the woman, since men by the laxity of public opinion often go unpunished even when known to be the opposite of saviours. But enough of St Paul.

Luckily, as an alternative to these passages, the clergyman may introduce into the marriage ceremony a sermon of his own ; but unfortunately most officials of

the Church are not sufficiently original or brave to rise above the level of the sentiments and standards set them as models in the formularies of the Church. It would be scarcely fair to expect the ordinary priest, despite the refinement of public opinion, to think further than the Apostles so long as they are set forth as guides. What the ordinary preacher would do would be to say what St Paul does, but in so vague and verbose a manner as to obscure the barbarity of the Pauline teaching. This would be an undoubted gain. Yet it were a pity that words without any definite meaning should be uttered upon an occasion when the parties concerned would be intensely impressionable to idealistic and generous sentiments.

A model, accordingly, indicating the lines which the preacher should elaborate in the marriage sermon, ought to be embodied in the ceremony. I would therefore tentatively, and as a suggestion rather than a model, offer the following homily, which would remind the bride and bridegroom of the dignity, responsibility and moral conditions of a happy marriage :—

What greater good is there for two human souls than to feel that they are joined for life, to strengthen each other in all labour, to rest on each other in all sorrow, to minister to each other in all pain, and to be one with each other in silent, unspeakable memories at the moment of the last parting?

This is a great good. But what more solemn responsibility can a man assume than to take into his keeping for life—to make or to mar—the happiness of the woman he loves? What more precious trust can a woman accept than that her smile and her sympathy shall be henceforth the crowning glory in the life of him she loves, and the full compensation for all his toil and for every defeat in the battle of life?

The cynics of our day fondly declare that those who

enter marriage stake their happiness upon chances beyond all calculation. But it does not so appear to one who enters it with eyes fixed upon his or her own part in the fulfilment of the pledge. Such an one is aware that

Faithfulness can feed on suffering,
And knows no disappointment.

When sorely tried, it grows more beautiful, patient, prudent and serene ; and through these virtues not seldom creates again, in the heart that has wandered or grown cold, a love like unto itself.

Except in the rarest cases, those persons whose entrance into marriage is a lottery are the culprits, and the institution itself is not at fault. For the ordinary causes of unexpected discord in wedlock may be met and removed. There is no incalculable mystery in the relationship. Its problems may be solved by those who will, for only a better understanding is required, and that mutual adaptation which is love's method of living. Has anyone known love with its peace to die out where such constant thought had been bestowed upon it as so precious a possession deserves ?

True love is eternal ; but only as was that vestal fire which, sacred to the god of home, used to burn in the inmost shrine of every Roman and Grecian dwelling-house, and in the prytaneum of every city. The fire was eternal, but on condition that it was faithfully watched and fed by the vestal guardians. The husband and wife are themselves the guardians of the holy flame of love. It will not last if they neglect it ; but, if they tend it, will burn with ever kindlier light. And no one may plead lack of opportunity as an excuse.

The wise, who have read the human heart with clearest insight, tell us that there are two characteristics of love, but that these are not equal in worth. One they call heavenly and divine, because it rejoices in sacrifice and never seeks itself ; while the other they speak of as belonging to the earth and to the senses, because it is akin to pleasure and it sometimes misleads. The two elements are separable and may exist apart. That which is called earthly is delight in the presence of the beloved one ; that which is named heavenly is delight in the welfare of the beloved one.

Together they are both good and best ; but the lower, without the other, is a curse ; while the higher, even alone, is a blessing, and is worth any sacrifice which it may cost. To care for the welfare of the beloved is to feed the sacred flame.

Marriage, as a human institution, looks for its justification and support to love's higher element, which is steadfast and abiding. It does not depend upon fascination ; it is not alarmed at the waning of delight in outward grace ; for it creates, in the place of that, a delight of the spirit in the spirit of the beloved, whether near or far.

Those who thus understand marriage are accordingly aware that its vow, although in truth a sacrament, possesses no magic power which can secure and maintain happiness in wedlock. They know that hearts must be dedicated ever anew. Wedded love is like the manna which is said to have fallen from heaven as food for the Children of Israel on their journey through the wilderness. They found that each day they must gather it afresh for that day's use, since no one could live upon the manna of yesterday's gathering. Thus it is with love.

Less perverse than the words of St Paul, but not quite innocuous, is the prayer which the priest must say in the marriage ceremony, beginning—"O God, who by thy mighty power hast made all things of nothing ; who also (after other things set in order) didst appoint, that out of man (created after thine own image and similitude) woman should take her beginning ; . . ." Knowing as we do that no such thing ever happened, and resenting the implied superiority of man as nearer to the Creator and the slight upon woman as dependent upon man for her very being, we cannot allow this passage to remain. The Marriage Service ought to be so true and earnest that no morally ugly fairy-tales could find any place in it. This one has not even the charm of quaintness, so vividly does it remind us of the tragic history of woman in the economy of social life, and so anxious is our solicitude that at last

every falsehood by which man has made plausible an unjust advantage over the physical weakness of woman shall be dropped, and in its place the truth, with healing compensation, shall be substituted.

Immediately preceding the prayer from which I have quoted is another which, the rubric says, is to be omitted when the woman is past child-bearing. Now this prayer introduces an incongruous element of levity into the marriage ceremony of the Church of England. What educated man to-day believes that prayer to a supernatural agent could have any effect upon the fruitfulness of marriage? It is therefore worse than idle—it is offensive to taste and mars the solemnity of the occasion—that the priest should be made to cry out, “O merciful Lord, and heavenly Father, by whose gracious gift mankind is increased; We beseech thee, assist with thy blessing these two persons, that they may both be fruitful in procreation of children.”

One feels almost that one ought to apologise for writing upon this so-called “solemnisation” of matrimony. But I must remind my readers that it is not I but the Prayer Book that is at fault. Had I the power, I should not allow the marriage rite to continue to be a travesty of all that we count finest in the relation of man and woman, and truest in the order of nature and the development of the human race. From each of the details of the present formulary one is glad to hasten the moment one has but indicated the idea underlying it.

Turn, for instance, to this question which the minister shall ask: “Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?” Here again we are confronted by the ghost of the old custom that a woman was owned by her father or other near male relative, and at marriage was handed over to her new owner. In our day, with our

women storming the outposts of the House of Commons in insistence upon their right of suffrage, is it possible that, when this question is put by the minister, no woman will speak out: "I myself, under God, give myself to be married to this man"? A protest from every woman in the land who so thinks would soon cause the "giving away" of the bride to be omitted from the Church's ceremony. The only alternative to such a course is to insist that this interrogation be preceded by another: "Who giveth this man to be married to this woman?" Sociologically it is true both of the man and woman that neither is self-owned, and that there is, despite the fullest independence, also a dependence, first of each upon parents and family, as representing the community at large, and after marriage upon each other. The most advanced countries now make it a condition that no man shall be allowed to marry under the age of twenty-four without the consent of his parents. This being so, would it not be in perfect harmony with this law, that the person who has given the needed consent should give the man to be married to the woman? Indeed, nothing could better educate the public to the meaning of the law than such a form. Nor is there a lack of ground for believing that many restraints which hitherto have been imposed only upon the woman, instead of being removed from her, should now be placed equally upon the man as an agent responsible to the community.

There has been much controversy as to the differences between the set of questions put to the man and to the woman to bind them to loyalty in the marriage bond. The woman promises to obey; the husband is not required to give any such pledge. Now, many have felt the injustice of exacting the vow from the woman and not the man, but no one has thought of any other

way out of the difficulty than by dropping the word "obey." This would be a vast improvement upon the present partiality ; but, if I do not mistake the trend of the times and the secret of a happy marriage, the word should not only be retained as a part of the woman's vow but also added to the man's. Is it not a fact in the experience of all married persons, where the union has at all approximated to the ideal, that the wise, self-respecting husband, along certain lines of action, is as ready to render implicit obedience to the wife's word as is the wife to his ? Not even genius is so many-sided and balanced that it may not need the common sense, the tender foresight, the strong will uttered by another, and may not be glad in crises to give unquestioning obedience. A great element in the beauty of a happy married life is this partnership in understanding, now the one and now the other controlling, and each grateful to the other for the other's supplementary weight and strength.

The extortion of a vow of obedience from the woman alone and the implication that she only is given away by another, are but survivals of a type of ceremony prevalent among many savages and ancient peoples. In Croatia it is a part of the marriage rite for the bridegroom to box the ears of the bride, as a sign that he now is her master. In ancient Russia it was the custom for the father to take a whip and, after striking his daughter gently with it, to tell her that he had done so for the last time, and then to present the whip to the bridegroom. Even as mere ceremony these forms are not pleasant. But at least the agelong injustice that has been done to woman would be removed if the woman were now allowed to return the formal compliment.

We also note a difference implied in the relative

attitude of husband and wife by the requirement that the bridegroom should place a ring upon the bride's finger, but she none upon his. During this act of the ceremony he is required to say, "With this ring I thee wed, with my body I thee worship, and with all my worldly goods I thee endow : In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

No corresponding utterance is exacted of the bride. As to the formula itself, the statement "With all my worldly goods I thee endow" never has been true. But since recent changes in law and custom it has receded further than of old from the facts of the economic relationship of husband and wife. As a historic fact, the wife, if she had any worldly goods, was the one who endowed the husband with them all. Yet this grim aspect of the tragedy of woman is not unveiled in the present rite.

But the most glaring fault in this statement to be made by the bridegroom, as in the set of words to be repeated by both the bride and bridegroom, is one of omission. Nowhere is there any recognition in these pledges, or in any other part of the marriage ceremony, that the husband and wife have any duties or responsibilities, so far as the institution of marriage is concerned beyond their duties to each other and, under the contingency of offspring, to their children. Now, it is this self-centredness of marriage, this intense focussing of duty and inclination within the family and the home, which has made of marriage as it exists to-day an institution in very great part hostile to the best interests of national life. The responsibilities of love and tenderness, so it is implied, find their full sphere of activity within the narrow walls of the home. The result is that in most families, in proportion as the husband and wife concentrate their thought and work upon the home, they dis-

regard the well-being of the State at large. Family virtue is by no means civic virtue ; and in our day the most public-spirited men and women find perhaps as much hindrance as help in the so-called duties of the family.

It would undoubtedly tend to broaden this too restricted interpretation of the conjugal sphere of duty, if into the pledge taken both by bride and bridegroom were incorporated a promise that as husband and wife the two shall make their joint life subservient to the better life of the community at large. In the place of the one-sided giving of a ring there should be, as has long been the custom among the Jews, an exchange of rings, and accompanying this act of exchange the bride and bridegroom should together in unison repeat some such words as these :—"With these rings we wed each other, pledging ourselves in honour to prefer each other's good, and together to live for the common good."

The note here struck is the clue to the deeper harmonies of married life. But this pledge of devotion to the common good should be introduced by a formula uttered by the clergyman, explaining the nature of marriage as society's approval of the union of the bride and bridegroom. This opportunity to teach the truly social significance of marriage and to check the devastating inroads of individualism and anarchy in sex life cannot be passed by. As an introduction, therefore, to the pledge of devotion to the common good the following formulary and pledges might be introduced :—

A marriage ceremony is not merely a pledge between the bride and the bridegroom. Human society as a whole is one of the participants in the sacrament. The marriage vow is the sacrament of renewing life, and of the future manhood and womanhood of the world. No other act which two individuals can perform is fraught with deeper

import to the community at large than the selection by each of the other for the most intimate comradeship and union. There may be many acts in life that concern only those who engage in them. But among these cannot be classed the intimacy of man and woman. Here the health and sanity, the character and intelligence, the beauty and the hope of the world are at stake. Those are, indeed, poor interpreters of the needs of human society who imagine that the relations of man and woman may be left to individual caprice or be settled by private agreement. The welfare of the community is no less involved than that of husband and wife. The contract is not so much between the man and woman as between the community on the one side and the marrying couple on the other. The ceremony which solemnises this compact is nothing less than the act of organised society approving and confirming a life union of one man and one woman, and the acknowledgment on their part of the social responsibilities undertaken by them in that union.

Such being its nature, no mere civil ceremony performed by a magistrate of the law (who is never more than the representative of force) can embody or convey adequately the commitment by the community or the pledge of those who marry. For the real compact is between society in all the fullness and richness of human life and the individual man and woman in their hour of deepest affection and highest hope. It has, accordingly, been the custom for ministers of religion, as representatives of the tenderer spirit and the higher aspirations of the nation's life, to be recognised as officials of the State for the purpose of performing the marriage ceremony; and where they are not so recognised, it has been customary for them to add to the civil another solemnisation of matrimony.

In accordance with such custom, we who are here present have been asked to be participants in a sacrament of marriage. I now therefore invite this man and this woman to stand before me, and, in the spirit and in the consciousness of a most holy sacrament, to answer these questions:—

Wilt thou have this woman to thy wedded wife, to live together in the honourable estate of matrimony? Wilt thou shield her, love her, comfort her, honour, obey and

keep her, in sickness and in health ; and, forsaking all other, keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live ?

(I will.)

Wilt thou have this man to thy wedded husband, to live together in the honourable estate of matrimony ? Wilt thou minister to him, love, honour, obey and keep him, in sickness and in health ; and, forsaking all other, keep thee only unto him, so long as ye both shall live ?

(I will.)

Will you join right hands, and you, , repeat after me these words :—

I, , take thee, , to my wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to the holy purpose of marriage ; and thereto I plight thee my troth.

Will you, , repeat these words :—

I, , take thee, , to my wedded husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to the holy purpose of marriage ; and thereto I plight thee my troth.

Will you, , place this ring upon the finger of your bride ; will you, , place this ring upon the finger of your bridegroom ; will you together in unison repeat after me these words :—

(Here would follow the pledge of devotion to the common good suggested above.)

As in the parts which we have already analysed we find the marriage ceremony of the Church to some extent even grotesque, we are prepared for analogous defects in the opening address of the priest, to which we must for a moment turn our attention.

In that address it is declared that matrimony is an estate which was instituted of God in the time of man's innocency. Now, there never was any such time. Man

is more innocent to-day than he has ever been in the past ; and nobody whose imagination has been touched by the evolutionary theory of development—and all but the most ignorant have been so touched—has the least belief in any such primeval state of purity. There was a primitive condition of utter ignorance of right and wrong, but it was the ignorance of the lower orders of animal creation. The fall from that state into sin was not a fall from moral innocency. If it was at that time that God instituted marriage, the words should read, “Instituted of God in the time of man’s moral ignorance.”

Whether the expression “instituted of God” should survive revision or not depends upon the nation’s agreement as to what the word “God” means. But if it is retained, it must be explained so that there shall be no doubt in anyone’s mind, that matrimony is ordained of the social conscience, in the interests of the unborn generations of men. If “God” is cited as the authority on whose will and word the institution rests, it must be made evident that “God” is identical with each man’s own moral judgment, with enlightened public opinion, and with the force and sanction of the sovereign State, as embodied in all administrators of the law—including the police. The will of the people, the voice of the people, are the will and voice, in this case, of God. If the literary judgment of the nation shall decide that the word “God” is to denote an intelligent Creator of the universe, then the expression must be omitted, because it will carry no weight of social authority and add no binding power to the Church’s solemnisation of matrimony.

The further statement in the priest’s opening address, to the effect that matrimony signifies the mystical union between Christ and his Church, is altogether out of place.

It is a device of the priestly order to force attention to the claims of the ecclesiastical organisation.

The reference to Christ's having wrought his first miracle at a marriage ceremony should likewise be expunged. The institution of matrimony does not require supernatural sanctions, and the reference to miracles damages instead of enhancing its claims in the minds of those to whom the very thought of miracles is repellent. Very few persons, whether they think Christ divine or not, believe that by a fiat of his will he transmuted water into wine. If this reference is to be retained, some qualification should be inserted which would class the story in the category of legends and myths.

The statement that Christ once adorned and beautified a marriage rite by his presence is less objectionable, although it reflects charm rather upon Christ than upon the state of matrimony. It would be a little remarkable for even an ordinary mortal to abstain throughout his life from participation in a rite so social and so necessary.

But altogether it is a very weak reason to offer on behalf of matrimony that Christ adorned it with his presence or that St Paul commended it as honourable. And the only explanation of the fact that the Christian, as such, is unable to find any better reasons, is that matrimony was not in the times either of the Old or the New Testament a distinctively religious rite. It was not only pagan but civil or secular. The marriage ceremony of the Christian Church is not an ordinance instituted by the Founder of Christianity. The first Christians were married civilly. Indeed, until 1563 marriage was counted valid by the Catholic Church without ecclesiastical rite. The Bible contained no special authorisation of a marriage sign. Hence the fact that the compilers of the ritual had to go far afield to find any so-called Bible reasons for its form.

But in the latter half of the priest's opening address we come upon a very wonderful and unique feature of the Book of Common Prayer. It is a part which those condemn who dare to say what they think ; however they reverence the Prayer Book, they wish that this portion could be omitted ; and I understand that among the many "illegal practices" of the clergy is the omission of it. My own opinion is that this part is objectionable only in form ; in its intent it is the wisest and profoundest thing in the Prayer Book. Historically it is of the utmost significance. It marks the advent of sociological and psychological, in the place of supernaturalistic and miraculous, reasons for a religious ceremony. After having satisfied the craving for supernaturalism by alluding to the state of man's innocence, to the mystical union between Christ and the Church, and to the miracle at the wedding feast at Cana, the priest warns those present that matrimony must not be "taken in hand unadvisedly, lightly, or wantonly, to satisfy men's carnal lusts and appetites, like brute beasts that have no understanding ; but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God." Then follows the newly recognised sanction which the freedom of thought of the Reformation had made potent ; the priest says that the bride and bridegroom must duly consider the causes for which matrimony was ordained ; and the causes which he cites are all sociological and psychological.

The mere fact that he cites natural reasons of social expediency shows that those who formulated this address were abandoning the appeal to authority and were falling back upon the moral judgment of men and their experience that social utility requires the regulation of the love of man and woman in the community. The sentence which introduces these special causes for which

matrimony was ordained does not say by whom it was instituted ; but even if it implies that it was established by the Creator of the universe, it assigns social utility as his reason. If the implication is that the Church has ordained it, then the Church found its motives in the same purpose.

It is to be regretted that this first bit of sociology and psychology (or, if you please, physiology) introduced into the Book of Common Prayer should not have been more carefully worded and more delicately thought out in detail. It is the most important and encouraging element in the whole of the Church's rites ; yet on account of its defect of analysis and of literary form, it has already been discarded by the Episcopal Church of America, and it is not looked upon with favour in England. My own recommendation, however, is that instead of being discarded it should be amended.

The first reason here assigned as an object for which matrimony was ordained is given as "the procreation of children, to be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and to the praise of his holy Name." This statement is inexact, as well as now somewhat harsh on account of the choice of words. It is not true that the object of marriage is the procreation of children ; that could take place without the sanction of society in its sovereign capacity. Marriage is ordained in order that the children shall, to use the Church's phraseology, "be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and to the praise of his holy Name." Surely no Christian could object to such a statement ; and in order that others, not Christians, might find no offence, it would only be necessary to translate the expression into the language of the universal moral sentiment. The meaning is that marriage was ordained in order that children might be

brought up to be good men and women. This, I may be allowed to reiterate, is more important to say than any other one sentence that could be uttered in a marriage ceremony. The opening address continues : "Secondly, It was ordained for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication ; that such persons as have not the gift of continency might marry, and keep themselves undefiled members of Christ's body." This statement is not only indelicate in language : the thought underlying it has not been carefully analysed. It is inconceivable that incontinent conduct could be made continent by receiving the social sanction. Conduct must conform to the intent and purpose animating the social sanction, or the persons who practise it are still defiled, though they were ten times "members of Christ's body." Legalised incontinence, in other words, would still be incontinence ; and no phrase of the marriage ceremony ought even faintly to imply the contrary. It is hard, however, to believe that those who formulated this second cause meant so coarsely as their words sound. We all know that matrimony was ordained by nations in order that the love of man and woman might not work mischief to the nation's life ; in some such words, then, let this be stated.

The opening address of the priest ends thus :— "Thirdly, It was ordained for the mutual society, help, and comfort, that the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity. Into which holy estate these two persons present come now to be joined. Therefore if any man can shew any just cause, why they may not lawfully be joined together, let him now speak, or else hereafter for ever hold his peace." This third reason is valid, and it might be allowed to stand unchanged.

Although these three causes, and perhaps still others, might be briefly indicated in some part of the marriage ceremony, they are perhaps hardly suitable in the introductory words, which ought, if possible, to catch the spirit which presumably animates the bride and bridegroom, rather than the deeper-lying and almost unconscious grounds which justify the community in interfering with the union of man and woman. It is astonishing how little the sentiment of unselfish love is given recognition in the present marriage rite. One would almost suppose that idealistic reverence for the beloved, and desire to serve and to remain loyal in spite of suffering and hardship, had never entered into the lives of those who formulated the marriage rite. Is it possible that monks or other professed celibates fashioned the ceremony? Surely there is none of the inspiration of chivalry in any sentence or word of the present rite; no evidence of any experience of what the best men and women mean by conjugal love. One could well understand this omission had our rite descended directly from the social ideas of the ancient Greeks, to whom the higher sort of friendship of husbands with wives or, generally, of men with women was totally unknown, thanks to the contempt of the masculine mind for the society of women.

The present rite, therefore, it would seem, ought to begin with the finest and clearest assertion that the love of man and woman in conjugal union is superior to all mere outward attractions. It ought to be declared to be a spiritual union, a bond of mind with mind, of purpose with purpose, and on this account to be unchangeable. I would therefore suggest that the marriage ceremony of the Church of England should open with Shakespeare's words, immortal in their fine assertion of the triumph of love over every adversity :—

Let us not to the marriage of true minds
 Admit impediments. Love is not love
 Which alters when it alteration finds,
 Or bends with the remover to remove :
 Oh, no ! It is an ever-fixèd mark,
 That looks on tempests and is never shaken ;
 It is the star to every wandering bark,
 Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
 Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
 Within his bending sickle's compass come ;
 Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
 But bears it out even to the edge of doom.

After these words have been said or sung, there might well follow in the opening address by the priest a setting forth of the meaning of the marriage ceremony. A justification of the ceremony reflects dignity upon the institution of matrimony itself, which again must be declared to find its foundation only in self-renouncing love. As a check, therefore, to certain modern views which incline to regard the ceremony as superfluous, and to count sense attraction more important than the willingness of affection to assume responsibilities, I would commend as socially expedient, and at the same time edifying and appropriate to the sentiment of the occasion, some such exordium as the following :—

The sanction of society is essential to the happiness of those who would truly wed. Except they receive it, they cannot be at peace with themselves or the world. Love that is honourable will not hide ; it hastens to tell its glad secret ; it craves that the world shall rejoice with it. Herein it is to be distinguished from mere fascination and selfish passion, which oftentimes delight in remaining unknown to others, and may even prefer that which the world would forbid, because it is forbidden. But true love is as open as the day, and seeks to be commended and approved, and to be safeguarded by society not only from outward temptation, but also from inward weakness. This

necessary approval by the community, however, cannot be conveyed, and therefore does not exist, except in some form of expression. The marriage ceremony is the world's actual endorsement given to a union in love of man and woman. It is, therefore, of that solemn and significant kind which has for centuries been known as a sacrament.

It is the one sacrament in which love and duty blend in perfect harmony. It is love's pledge to the community to do the thing that is right ; but, at the same time, it is the voice of duty rejoicing that for once its yoke is easy and its burden light. Nothing is freer from self or more ready to fulfil every duty, than the love which honestly takes the marriage vow. Whoever knows the nature and effects of wedded love will discern that of it can be literally said that which Thomas à Kempis declares to be the nature and effects of divine love. His words fit with rare precision the spirit of the men and women who have unselfishly united their lives. "Love is a great thing—yea, a great and thorough good ; by itself it makes everything that is heavy light ; and it bears evenly all that is uneven. For it carries a burden that is no burden, and makes everything that is bitter, sweet. Love will not be kept back by anything low and mean. It desires to be free and estranged from all selfish affections, so that its inward sight may not be hindered, that it may not be entangled by any outward prosperity or subdued by any adversity. Love is circumspect, humble and upright, not yielding to softness or to levity ; not attending to vain things : it is sober, chaste, steady, quiet and guarded in all the senses. Nothing is sweeter than love ; nothing more courageous, nothing higher, nothing wider ; nothing more pleasant, nothing fuller or better in heaven or earth. He that loveth, flieth, runneth and rejoiceth ; he is free, and is not bound. He giveth all for all, and hath all in all. He respecteth not the gifts, but turneth himself above all goods unto the giver. Love feels no burden ; thinks nothing of trouble ; attempts what is above its strength ; pleads no excuse of impossibility, for it thinks all things are possible for itself. It is therefore able to undertake all things, and it completes many things where he who does not love faints and lies down. Though weary, love is not tired ;

though pressed, it is not straitened ; though alarmed, it is not confounded ; but, as a lively flame, it forces its way upwards, and securely passes through all. Love is active, sincere, affectionate, pleasant and amiable, courageous, patient, faithful, prudent, long-suffering, manly, and never seeking itself."

The closing sentence of the priest's opening declaration in the Prayer Book, like the charge which follows it, asking the couple to confess if they know any impediment why they should not be lawfully joined together in matrimony, is prompted by the same purpose as that which inspires the publishing of the banns of marriage. It is the nearest recognition in the marriage ceremony of the community's claim to being a partner in every such contract. It implies that the State has interests at stake. It also alludes to the fact that not all unions are allowed by the State, but that, on the contrary, some are branded as criminal. This circumstance is directly indicated both in the charge to confess and in the banns. But this charge and these banns are altogether inadequate, for two reasons. In the first place, the modern community, which should have an opportunity to protest in case the persons ought not to marry, is not reached by the publication of banns in church on three successive occasions. This device was perhaps adequate in the days when men and women for the most part never left their native town or village, and were known by everyone in the tiny social group. So enlarged and complex is modern life, so wide the area of individual change of domicile, so much do people travel, that despite the banns persons who have no legal right to be married may do so with small risk of exposure.

In place of publishing the banns in church, the central Government should print and publish throughout the United Kingdom the names and addresses of all applicants

for marriage. This device would not be in itself adequate. Indeed, nothing would be equal to the emergency but a verification of the identity of each applicant, and of the correctness of his name and address. Publication in a Government report thus based would prevent many of the now prevalent cases where some unscrupulous man or woman inveigles an innocent and ignorant person into marriage. Nor could two unscrupulous persons so easily as now obtain a marriage licence illegally.

The second cause, however, which renders inadequate the publishing of banns lies deeper. It consists in the fact that many circumstances which are not yet legal barriers to marriage ought, in the interest of the nation at large, to be made so. Nothing has so undermined the belief in marriage as the fact that wrongs to the souls and bodies of men, constituting a national peril, are perpetrated with impunity under the sanction of legal marriage. From the point of view of health, many persons are such that whoever they marry and whatever offspring they may have are in danger of misery. Everybody who knows such facts feels that, if possible, such persons ought to be prevented from receiving the social sanction to their union. It would be possible for the State to require every medical practitioner to keep a record of all cases of illness which come under his notice ; these records could be submitted to the central authorities, and thus the health-history of every individual man and woman applying for a marriage licence could be investigated, and the decision as to whether the licence should be granted could be made dependent upon the record. Moreover, every man and woman should have a right to investigate the health-history of any person who had proposed marriage to him or her.

The laws, then, must be made more rigid and dis-

criminating, and this new sense of the responsibility of the community as the most interested partner in every marriage contract will be sure to find expression in the Church's solemnisation of matrimony.

There is only one other feature of the marriage ceremony as prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer which deserves our attention. After a prayer by the priest for blessing upon the bride and bridegroom there is to be said or sung either Psalm 128 or Psalm 67. It well may be that these are the most appropriate passages of a poetic nature in the Bible, where there is any reference at all that could be turned to use in a marriage ceremony. But, unless there would be some calamity attached to her seeking an appropriate lyric elsewhere, why should the Church confine herself to the Bible? There are scores of passages from the English poets far more appropriate than either Psalm 128, with its much talk about the fruitful wife and the children's children, or Psalm 67, with its chauvinistic sentiment. How much more appropriate that instead of these should be chanted James Russell Lowell's beautiful and telling lines depicting the humility, patience and sweet radiance of true love!—

True love is but a humble low-born thing,
And hath its food served up in earthen ware ;
It is a thing to walk with hand in hand,
Through th' everydayness of this work-day world,
Baring its tender feet to every roughness,
Yet letting not one heart-beat go astray
From beauty's law of plainness and content ;
A simple fireside thing, whose quiet smile
Can warm earth's poorest hovel to a home ;
Which, when our autumn cometh, as it must,
And life in th' chill wind shivers bare and leafless,
Shall still be blest with Indian-summer youth
In bleak November, and with thankful heart
Smile on its ample stores of garnered fruit,

As full of sunshine to our aged eyes
 As when it nursed the blossoms of our spring.
 Such is true love, which steals into the heart
 With feet as silent as the lightsome dawn
 That kisses smooth the rough brows of the dark,
 And hath its will through blissful gentleness.

For an anthem appropriate to our conception of marriage as the sacrament of renewing life, the following magnificent lines from Swinburne could not be excelled :—

With us the winds and fountains
 And lightnings live in tune ;
 And morning-coloured mountains
 That burn into the noon,
 The mist's mild veil on valleys muffled from the moon :

The thunder-darkened highlands,
 And lowlands hot with fruit,
 Sea-bays and shoals and islands,
 And cliffs that foil man's foot,
 And all the flower of large-limbed life and all the root :

With us the fields and rivers,
 The grass that summer thrills,
 The haze where morning quivers,
 The peace at heart of hills,
 The sense that kindles nature, and the soul that fills ;

The strife of things and beauty,
 The fire and light adored,
 Truth, and life-lightening duty,
 Love without crown or sword,
 That by his might and godhead makes man god and lord.

It would be wise for the ceremony to close with a re-assertion of the sacramental nature of marriage and the social necessity of the form to which the bride and bridegroom have submitted.

The service accordingly might finish with sentences to this effect :—“ In the lives of and ,

this hour will always shine supreme ; it will shed a softening radiance over misfortune and add splendour to every triumph ; not only because its vow possesses virtue in itself, but also because it will remain to them for ever the symbol and prototype of each new day's new plighting of love's troth."

CHAPTER XV

THE BURIAL SERVICE

THE opening rubric of the Order for the Burial of the Dead reads thus : "Here is to be noted, that the Office ensuing is not to be used for any that die unbaptised, or excommunicate, or have laid violent hands upon themselves." No one, judging from the point of view of common humanity and educational utility, can waver in the desire that the Book of Common Prayer should be revised at least to the extent of deleting this regulation. Three classes of persons are denied the privilege of receiving from the community the last marks of respect and homage, human tenderness and pity. Yet these are the very classes which the spirit of Christianity has most yearned to save, and for which, according to Christian doctrine, an infinite sacrifice was gladly made. It well may be that a separate form of burial rite, or at least one with special features of its own, should be used for each of these classes of persons, but there is no reason why they should be wholly excluded from the pale of our national humanity.

The cruelty which animated the formulation and authorisation of this rubric is so opposed to our newer humanism, that it tends to awaken in us a feeling against its authors similar to that which they undoubtedly felt

towards all human beings who died unbaptised, excommunicate, or by laying violent hands upon themselves. In the spirit of modern humanism, however, we must restrain our revulsion by recalling to mind the historic fact that the cruelty of this rubric was no peculiar and special outburst of conscious inhumanity, but was generally characteristic of an earlier stage of social and moral evolution. It was part of that same blindness and hardness which manifested itself in many customs now made obsolete by the new spirit. It was one in its psychic origin with the whole penal code of England. Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, more than two hundred different offences were punished, at least nominally, by the death-penalty. Only through the indefatigable enthusiasm and efforts of Jeremy Bentham and his disciple Sir Samuel Romilly was this stain wiped off from English life. But the removal of the same kind of blot from the organised religion of England, as seen in the opening rubric of the Burial Service, still awaits its Bentham and Romilly.

If there be any human beings whom the Church ought to bury with infinite tenderness and the humility of conscious shame, it is those who have laid violent hands on themselves. For had the Church done her work aright, had she fulfilled her mission, none would have been driven to the despair of self-destruction. Not even a discrimination between the sane and the insane, nor the legal fiction that almost all suicides are insane, can wash the guilt of their sin from the hands of the Church. For, had she done her work aright, the circumstances and exigencies of life would not drive men mad. No, nor would unfortunate creatures be born predestined by heredity to madness. The Church herself is culpable. Had she done her work aright during the last two

thousand years, her love and service would by now have made the life of every mortal precious to himself and the strength of every mortal equal to the task of self-direction.

The Church has erred egregiously in interpreting her duty to those driven to self-destruction. Her especial concern should have been to render homage to the humanity which had lain hidden in those who did not find life worth the living or themselves equal to life's strain. Instead, perhaps because blinded to her own guilt, she refused to bury the suicide, and still refuses to do so. This whole rubric, however, will be discarded by the same spirit which, more than half a century ago, abolished the law and the practice of burying suicides at cross-roads with a stake driven through the body.

The Prayer Book should, as I have said, furnish a special rite for the reverent burying of those who have been bewildered by life's contradictions. And the essential burden of such a rite should be that these unfortunates have been more sinned against than sinning, and that, except for her unfaithfulness to her mission, the Church would long since have filled the world with the love that banishes despair and the self-control that preserves sanity.

As to the excommunicated, the thought that the Church should exercise her ghostly powers to terrorise heretics into outward conformity provokes in us a smile of pitying contempt ; for we are apt to think that excommunication is a practice long since obsolete, and that if attempted to-day it could excite no constraining dread. But in the refusal of a State Church to bury an excommunicated member there still exists a terrible penalty to all who, like myself for instance, regard the Church as the nation organised in its ideal judgments and aspirations. When the Church refuses to bury its dead, the nation, as an

organic being consisting of individual souls, consciously and purposely extrudes from itself as a foreign and monstrous element one of its own vital offspring. An old-fashioned militant secularist might perhaps have scorned the threat of being refused Christian burial ; but such a person was undoubtedly oblivious of the social and purely human and natural character and function of the Christian Church. Even its being Christian has not rendered the Church superhuman and supernatural, nor has all its supernaturalism rendered it essentially inhuman and, therefore, despicable or negligible. The Church of England is England acting in a definite capacity, and no one should be refused either England's recognition of his service or England's confession of her responsibility in part for his failure to think or to do aright.

Not only in idea is excommunication, through this penalty of refusal of Christian burial, still an occasion of dread and therefore a living power of the Church ; for the refusal to bury an excommunicated person may at any moment become an actual event in English life. Excommunication is not yet an obsolete practice. It was as late as the eighteen-sixties that the brave and noble John William Colenso, Bishop of Natal, was publicly excommunicated for heresy by Bishop Gray of Capetown, and it was only a happy accident that Bishop Colenso did not die while still under the curse of excommunication. Had he died then, England, as an organised unit of spiritual life, would have been forced by this opening rubric of her Burial Service into the shame and guilt of withholding her homage from him.

It is a question whether the finer and broader religious consciousness of our day could find any occasion for a special burial rite for those whom the Church might count as guilty of advocating doctrines hostile to the

well-being of the nation. It is conceivable that the sin of heresy will never again be judged as of such a nature that the stigma of spiritual ostracism could be set upon it. If so, then the ordinary rite would be allowed to the excommunicated. But this leads us to a principle which evidently the authors of the Prayer Book refused to entertain: the rite of burial by the State Church should not imply that the person over whom it is performed has been a member of the Church organisation. By their very nature, the rite of baptism and the rite of Holy Communion are for Church members only; but, just as the marriage ceremony should not imply formal membership in the Church organisation, and need in no wise imply it, so the Burial Service should be applicable to the case of everyone who had been a member of the nation.

From the point of view of national idealism, it has been a blunder of the Church of England to count excommunication a reason for refusal of the rite of burial. One cannot help feeling that the cause of such a blunder was the excessive control of the clergy, as opposed to the laity, in the formulations of the Church. The self-interest of the clergy as a class has undoubtedly tempted them, as it always tempts ruling classes, to regulate the whole organisation which supports them, at the expense of the larger life of the nation. It seemed to magnify and glorify the Church to withhold any marks of respect from those who refused formally to support the Church.

The same error which led to the excluding of the excommunicate from this benefit of the Church lies at the root of the rubric's refusal to allow any unbaptised person to be buried according to the Church's rite. If it be expedient that a special burial rite, or special features of a rite, should be used in the case of Church members

as distinguished from citizens in general, then, from the point of view of the nation as the organic unit of religious life, another rite should be formulated which should be applicable to members of the nation who had never been initiated by baptism or any other form of ritual into any religious organisation. For the consciousness of the nation at large has long ago outgrown the formal and mechanical prejudice which divides human beings into sheep and goats, according as they have or have not been initiated into the work and life of religious bodies.

If there is to be a special form of burial for the unbaptised, it will be altogether free from any implication that the unbaptised are to be classed with moral or intellectual delinquents of any kind. On the contrary, the Church henceforth cannot afford to withhold deference and reverence from those who for conscience' sake have held aloof from organised religious fellowships. And in the case of those who have remained unbaptised because they had no interest in self-conscious religious teaching or organisation, their peculiar individuality shall have full respect given to it ; for such indifference, or even abhorrence of self-conscious religious life, may itself be due to a greater sensitiveness to the vital needs of the nation as a whole. It may be that at any given period, in any special social group of the nation, other interests, like art or science or politics, are being neglected or sacrificed to an over-powerful religious interest, and that the claims of these interests require special emphasis by individuals.

It will have become evident to my readers that the policy of revision which I advocate in regard to the Order for the Burial of the Dead is not simply that the present form should be revised or replaced by another one, but either that a number of different burial services

to suit the chief classes of circumstance which exist, or that only alternative elements of one burial rite shall be sanctioned, and the option of different combinations of these elements, as they best fit the case of each person to be buried, shall be left to the friends of the deceased and the officiating clergyman. As in the present marriage ceremony one prayer is to be omitted if the bride have passed a certain age, so special rubrics could indicate upon what occasions certain elements of a burial rite were to be used.

If the point of view involved in this policy be adopted, it must colour and in great part modify our criticism of the various parts of the existing order of burial. Many a part, if alternatives are to be permitted, might be allowed to stand, which otherwise one would be tempted to remove entirely. Any part of a ritual, however offensive in itself, if it be not compulsory, becomes thereby almost wholly innocuous. As regards my own criticism, therefore, I shall be found most lenient towards certain parts of the present Burial Service, on the understanding that they become optional instead of compulsory. Only such a proposal seems to me consistent with the point of view of an all-comprehensive nationalism and with due deference for the private taste and judgment of every individual person. The policy of alternatives would make it possible for the extremest freethinker and the intensest High Churchman to receive equal homage in death from the State Church. Then, while a rite congenial to the most literal and old-fashioned interpreters of Bible doctrine and of Church ceremony would be available, there need be no dissenters and no protestants.

What is still more, certain moral anomalies which now exist would cease for ever. At present the Church of England performs its burial rite over the bodies of

persons who throughout their lives have openly proclaimed their rejection of the whole fabric of conventional religion. Noting this fact, one might be tempted cynically to smile at the weakness and self-deception of those who boast themselves independent in thought and defiant of conventional opinion, and yet are quite ready to receive the last homage from the very institution they have attacked. How was it consistent, it may be asked, in Professor Huxley, that he should have protested so valiantly against the "drum ecclesiastic," and yet have allowed it to be beaten triumphantly over his own body the moment his ears were stopped in death? Nor could anyone recalling the intense sincerity and exquisite loyalty to truth revealed in Sir Leslie Stephen's *Agnostic's Apology* have felt it to be other than impiety towards the dead that Stephen should be buried by the Church's rite. These men must either have signified their willingness to be so buried, or else have expressed indifference as to what burial rite was performed over them. It is inconceivable that loving friends, unless they had known at least of such indifference, should have allowed anything to be uttered which went counter to the life and mission of the dead. It would, however, not have been timidity or cowardice in the departed to have allowed this, but an extreme absence of the thought of self, and a modest shrinking from any honour, however conventional, which should be paid to them personally. One may respect the feeling which might prompt them to say that in their own case it made no difference what words were uttered over their dead bodies, and that friends might do as they pleased; and yet one may deplore the consequences. It was the thought of these that led Mr Herbert Spencer, in making arrangements that his remains should be cremated, to provide that there should not be "any such ceremony as

is performed over the bodies or ashes of those who adhere to the current creed." But this request alone would have prevented Mr Spencer's being interred in the Abbey. Shall the nation never be allowed to honour such moral pioneers in death? One cannot but feel that the spiritual benefits to the nation would be incalculable if alternative forms were sanctioned by the Church, and if these forms were so varied in sentiment, however identical in spirit and purpose, as to cover fittingly such divergent cases as those of Stephen, Spencer, Huxley and Darwin on the one hand, and Gladstone and Pusey on the other.

In the light of these preliminary suggestions, I invite my reader to consider with me the various parts of the existing burial rite, so as to judge whether it is adequate or not to the national function which it is intended to perform; and, if not, what its special defects are, and how they are to be remedied.

In order thus to judge, we must have clearly in mind a standard of what a burial service should be. We must know what ideas we would require it to express, and what not to express. We must know what emotions we would wish it to awaken and what to allay. We must further have clearly in mind what the ultimate effect is which we wish the whole service to produce upon the character of those who participate in or witness the ceremony. Having thus clearly in mind the definite outlines of an ideal service, we must discover how far literature and the other arts which contribute to the purpose of ritual provide us with the materials for the embodiment of our ideal. If the materials be not already at hand in literature, the gaps must be filled in by compositions especially devised for the purpose. Thus equipped, we shall be able to place the ideal scheme and its embodiment in provisional form side by side with the

existing service of the Church, and by comparison can estimate for ourselves the degree to which the existing service is adequate or deficient.

Perhaps, from what has gone before, we may assume that not one rigid form but only various items or elements of a burial service should be authorised, option being allowed to friends of the deceased and to the officiating clergyman to select parts consonant with the special circumstance. As we reflect upon the varieties of circumstance, we are led to feel that one great classification which must be taken into consideration is the division between those whose lives have on the whole been successful as regards the higher ends of existence and those whose lives have been failures. If the dominant note, as one reflects upon the career of the deceased, is that of gratitude and of the peculiar form of rejoicing when one contemplates the fulfilment and perfection of any beautiful and noble work, it seems almost impossible that this sentiment should not find itself reflected in the burial ceremony. Where, however, the person to be buried is one whose life was marked by prolonged suffering or deficiency of any kind, physical, mental or social, the feeling awakened in mourners and the public at large is of a totally different order. There may be the same tenderness, but the regret is not sweetened so much by gratitude and admiration as by sympathetic rejoicing at the release and deliverance from pain or error which death has brought about. The Church, then, should sanction one statement fitted to the one circumstance and another to the other. No expression of homage and of the consolation to be derived by mourners who have lost a revered friend is to be found in the present Burial Service of the Church. No hint that there ever was such a thing as human dignity in an individual life or an occasion for spiritual gratitude to a

finite mortal is there embodied. Wholly and absolutely are such emotions turned towards an infinite Creator of the universe and of human existence. But even thus turned, the sentiment is totally unrelated to any human excellence as an occasion of gratitude to man's maker. Unqualifiedly, from beginning to end of the Burial Service, does the thought dominate that all human life, all human effort, all human purpose, striving and aspiration are vanity. The present Burial Service soothes (if it soothes) by turning the attention utterly away from the earthly career of man, and it attempts to produce this effect by proclaiming the worthlessness of earth-life except as the stepping-stone to a worthier existence beyond the grave. No words except the phrase "Our dear brother" in the whole burial rite even hint at what must, throughout the ages when this form has been used, have been the dominant emotion and sentiment in every case where friends have gathered to pay homage to their revered dead. I have spoken of the Burial Service as an act of respect and homage to the departed, but I have not meant to imply that the rite of the Church gives any expression to these feelings. They of course have always existed, but the Church hitherto has been rendered deaf and blind to them by dogmas which did not embrace them in its scheme of spiritual discipline.

Let us say, then, that one ideal feature for a certain class of burials must be the expression of loyalty and reverence to the dead, and of humility, and a sense on the part of the mourners that in comparison with the departed they themselves have been unworthy of the blessed presence of such a life as they have now lost. As regards an embodiment of this sentiment ready at hand and suitable to be appropriated by the Church, I find many scattered expressions of it, and I have made bold to take

such from a number of writers and place them in an order that at least approximately gives to them a progressive arrangement and creates an impression of unity. I invite my readers to judge of the following formulation as a possible part in a burial service from the point of view chiefly of the effect it would be likely to have in toning up the mourners and friends to that quality of heart and that strenuousness of will which are of most service to a nation :—

To our friends and loved ones we shall give the most worthy honour and tribute, if we never say nor remember that they are dead, but contrariwise that they have lived ; that hereby the brotherly force and flow of their action and work may be carried over the gulfs of death and made immortal in the true and healthy life which they worthily had and used. The dead are not dead if we have loved them truly. In our own lives we give them immortality.

Let us arise and take up the work they have left unfinished, and preserve the treasures they have won, and round out the circuit of their being to the fullness of an ampler orbit in our own.

There is so much selfishness in grief ; overwhelmed with a sense of loss, we are apt to think of nothing else. Rather with a noble resignation and thankfulness for what they have been to us should we consign our dear ones to the grave.

When are the good so powerful to guide and quicken, as after death has withdrawn them from us ? Then we feel that the seal is set upon what was made perfect in their souls. They take their place like stars in a region of purity and peace.

But it is a sad weakness, after all, that the thought of a man's death hallows him anew to us ; as if life were not sacred too—as if it were comparatively a light thing to fail in love and reverence to the brother who has to climb the whole toilsome steep with us, and all our tears and tenderness were due to the one who is spared that hard journey. Oh, the anguish of that thought, that we can never atone to our dead for the stinted affection we gave them, for the

light answers we returned to their complaints or their pleadings, for the little reverence we showed to that sacred human soul that lived so close to us !

Arise, be strong ! Thou art not free, thou poor and sadly stricken one, to stand aside in idle woe, but thou shalt make for the departed a memorial in thy life. The knowledge that something must be done calls us away from brooding over our griefs, and forces us back into the active currents of our life. Only the discharge of the duties of the heart can really console the heart. The love thou canst no longer lavish on one, the many call for it. The sympathy thou canst no longer give thy friend, the friendless cry for it. In alleviating the misery of others thine own misery will be alleviated, and in healing thou wilt find that there is cure.

It is not that we are singled out for a special judgment ; when we give up our dead, we but enter into a common sorrow, a sorrow that visits the proudest and the humblest, that has entered into unnumbered hearts before us and will enter into innumerable ones after us, a sorrow that should make the world one, and dissolve all other feelings into sympathy and love.

A number of hymns in harmony with this sentiment and appropriate for singing at a burial are to be found. One is that by Mr Malcolm Quin, containing the lines :—

They cannot die whose lives are part
Of that great life which is to be,
Whose hearts beat with the world's great heart,
And throb with its high destiny.

Then mourn not those who, dying, gave
A gift of greater life to man ;
Death stands abashed before the brave ;
They own a life he may not ban.

Another feature in a burial rite appropriate where the deceased has been loved and revered would be some apposite statement of what is perhaps the deepest, most tender and awe-inspiring experience known to the loving mourner. The experience to which I refer I have found

nowhere expressed in literature in a manner suitable for incorporation into a burial rite. So far as I am aware, it has been nowhere formulated as a fundamental principle, or perhaps even recognised as of universal applicability. It is true that in a specific historic instance and in its highest intensity, with great beauty and with the dramatic power of utter sincerity, it is to be found in the New Testament, and is familiar to us all ; but the very perfection of its embodiment there has blinded men to the universality of the psychic law which its supreme instance illustrates, and to the operation of that law in a minor degree in all cases in which the essential factors exist.

We are told in the New Testament story that when Jesus had died, those who had loved him and worked with him, instead of relaxing their devotion to him and the cause for which he had rendered up his life, drew closer to one another, in order to dedicate themselves with more unremitting zeal to him and his mission, that his life's work might suffer as little as possible by his bodily absence, and that his meaning and spirit might be obscured no more than was inevitable through the withdrawal of his personal radiance. The result was wholly unanticipated by them. From out the inmost heart of their concentrated grief burst forth an intenser fire of energy, love and joy than they had ever known before. Hitherto they had by intimacy of contact with their master become living souls ; but now, like him, they became quickening spirits. They had lost him outwardly, when lo ! within themselves what seemed an inexplicable mystery and miracle had been wrought. Now it was he in them, and not simply, as of old, they in him. Wonderful and rare, not to have been foreseen, discoverable only in the actual experience, and then hardly to be believed, was this transformation of bereavement into the triumph

of spiritual identity. Yet it was not the same as before his death ; and so they called the inward Christ not Jesus but the Comforter. Now, what happened in the life of the disciples in the highest degree, and for the first time in history with such full self-consciousness as to become articulate and a gospel of glad tidings, occurs in the souls of all mourners in proportion as they are to their dead as the disciples to their Lord. The Church has hitherto jealously magnified the special instance of the operation of this law, but in the future the glory of the experience testified to in the New Testament story will be that it was not an isolated and unique incident but the revealing instance of what will some day be a world-wide spiritual occurrence. Yet, if ever the pentecostal blessing is to become universal, it will be because spiritual statesmen have brought to mourners everywhere, in the Burial Services sanctioned of nations, not only the instance but the law of the instance of the coming of the Comforter to the Apostles.

In the case of those whose death cannot be otherwise regarded than as a deliverance from misfortune, mistake and suffering, the kindest and wisest form of burial may perhaps be one in which only the universal principles of duty and the general significance of death are dwelt upon, and no reference at all is made to the individual life and character of the departed. Indeed, as regards lives that have been lamentable failures, the present Burial Service is altogether appropriate in so far as it renders no honour to the memory of the dead ; yet in other respects, even for the burial of the unfortunate, the existing rite may be found sadly defective. But while no allusion to the sadness of the special life may sometimes be most considerate, in all except the extremest cases of misfortune it would be socially and morally expedient to bring home

to mourners and the interested public certain specific ideas. Especially would the thought be helpful, that it is wrong to brood over the deceased's hours of greatest pain and over the aspects of his career which are most distressing, as if they especially revealed the real and deepest life and character of the departed or had any value of their own. It is no more wise than it is kind or true to allow our thoughts to dwell chiefly upon the shadow and the weakness which have obscured the human ideal in the mind or body of a fellow-mortal. The present Burial Service, as it gives no recognition to the beauty, joy and excellence even of the best of men, is naturally still further removed from the sentiment for which I am here pleading. As I have found, and so can offer, no appropriate embodiment of the idea which I am suggesting, I may be permitted, in order the more fully to illustrate my meaning, to narrate that it was my privilege, not long since, to speak at the funeral of a man who had died after many months of extreme mental and physical suffering. During this period of decline his mind had been preyed upon by unfounded self-reproaches and by anxieties and forebodings for his family; in a moment of such despair he had once attempted to take his own life. His story was this: as a young working man, thrifty and ambitious, he had bought a house and for years had been paying for it by instalments. At the time when his health gave way, all had been paid up but the last few instalments, and the inability to meet these final payments drove him to despair. Here was a lifetime devoted with unflagging conscientiousness to the protection and care of wife and children. But the last painful weeks had so overshadowed the remembrance of the real character and the true life of the husband and father that the family seemed unable to recall anything but the bitter

end. At the funeral I had read and spoken words which it seemed to me must bring strength and peace. But the mourners sat as if crushed in spirit ; until, remembering what had been told me of the man's life, I said to them that it was their duty not to think of him as he was in the last weeks and the last hours of his life ; for this was not the real husband and father, as already he had begun to be touched by the spirit of death ; but it was their duty to think of him only in the full vigour of his manhood, when the wish of his heart and the inspiration of his life was to provide well and honourably for them. At last I had struck the note which made the chords of love in their hearts vibrate in living response. The eyes of the mourners were raised to mine in grateful acknowledgment. My words had lifted the burden, and with it the awful, numbing pain, from their souls. This thought they had never heard before—that the hour of death is as nothing, but that the man at his best, his steady purpose through a whole life-span, his years of work and self-denial for those he loves, are everything. Here, it seems to me, is a thought which should not be forgotten when the Burial Service is readapted, in the spirit of humanity, to the nation's needs.

Akin to the thought that we owe it to the departed to think of him at his best, to regard what he aspired to be as perhaps his essential self, rather than what he became, is the sense that for him death came as a deliverance ; and an utterance of this sentiment worthy of the sublimest ritual is found in the lines of Shelley's "Adonais" :—

He has outsoared the shadow of our night ;
 Envy and calumny, and hate and pain,
And that unrest which men miscall delight,
 Can touch him not and torture not again ;
From the contagion of the world's slow stain
 He is secure. . . .

As we compare such lines as these with the finest rhetoric of the Book of Common Prayer, we are compelled to wonder whether those who give unstinted praise to the English of the Church ritual do not first banish from their minds all memory of the winged language of our British poets.

Besides classifying the lives of mortals into those that have achieved fullness of existence and those who have fallen short of its richest fulfilments, a cross-division naturally suggests itself into those, on the one hand, who have died prematurely, yet to the end have given promise of full realisation ; and, on the other, those who have reached the natural length of man's life. It seems to me that the people of a nation should be disciplined by their spiritual teachers into a familiar acquaintance with the distinction between death as an inevitable event terminating the normal span of individual existence—that is, death due to the constitutionally inherent decline of vitality characteristic of all individuals of a species—and death which antagonises and thwarts, so to speak, the vital law of the individual organism by preventing the full development of which it is inherently capable. Such a distinction seems worthy of emphasis in the scheme of a nation's moral education, because premature deaths are something worse than mere deaths, and the bitterness in the grief they cause cannot justly be attributed to death as such ; they are preventable, and therefore are in a sense crimes of negligence or of positive injury, which the nation as a whole, by help of science, can, and in the course of time will, prevent. So that when children die, or men or women in the full vigour of their powers, there is an occasion for the expression of a peculiar and a poignant guilt and shame, for the mourning of penance, and a renewal of the vow of social service. But here literature furnishes us, as yet, with no material.

When poets reared in the new humanism break away

from the conventional notions of death and its significance in human society, their threnodies will educate the people to count the young and the vigorous who have died in the midst of happiness and hope as not themselves suffering misfortune. For there can be no doubt that at any instant a human life that is filled with gladness and has reached the perfection which at that instant constitutes its normal growth, is a perfected and completed whole, which cannot be contemplated without a sense that in itself it needs nothing which time could add. There can be no doubt that an unthwarted life is at every instant a finished product. Whatever promise of further fulfilment it may contain is in reference not to a something incomplete in itself, but in the social life round about it which needs and hopes for more. When the happy young and the vigorous die, the grief can never be essentially pity for the dead, but regret for those who remain. We may then literally rejoice, in proportion as our love is selfless and yet personal, for those who die in the perfection of gladness and strength. And somewhere in the ritual for the burial of the young and the strong there must enter in this note of homage to the beauty and dignity of the life which, in proportion as it is a loss to society, has suffered no injury by its untimely ending. For that untimeliness is only by reference to the needs of others. We might say that society's sense of loss is the measure of the self-completeness of the life that has been closed.

The discrimination which I have made between death in itself and the extraneous evil to society involved in what I may call violent and unnatural death, leads me to plead for the insertion in our Burial Service of some recognition of the naturalness, the universality, the tender beneficence to the individual, and the moral necessity to society, of natural death, and a refutation and condem-

nation, as superstitious and sinful, of the notion that death is an enemy to human purpose, and is the arch-terror for the human heart. This common notion is a falsehood, which needs only to be branded as such in order to be exposed as such. There has been what seems almost like a conscious conspiracy against mankind to prevent it from recognising the benignant features of the face of death. As Francis Bacon mildly describes this conspiracy, "Most of the doctrines concerning death are more cautionary and dreadful than the nature of things requireth. They have increased the fear of death in offering to cure it. For when they would have a man's whole life to be but a discipline or preparation to die, they must needs make men think that it is a dreadful enemy, against whom there is no end of preparing." The attribution of superstitions to the conscious device and cunning of priests of the supernatural has for a generation or more been stigmatised as superficial and unfounded. But so evidently have priests utilised their ascendancy and their assumed intimacy with the secrets of another world, so closely is this excessive caution and dread of death to be traced to the teachings of priests, that I have no doubt there will be before long a return, on the part of students of comparative religion, to the belief that the conscious self-interest of priests prompted this clothing of death in fictitious horrors. It is true that the Church of England Burial Service indulges in no such misrepresentation; but it does worse. In its assertion of physical resurrection it presupposes that death is the arch-terror; for why else should one deny that death was death? If death be no such terror, why should not the Burial Service even recognise the possibility that it may involve the annihilation of the individual self-consciousness? From the point of view of society at large, the individual,

through the absoluteness of his withdrawal from human co-operation the instant he dies, is converted to nothing—annihilated. And such annihilation cannot conceivably in itself be a calamity to any individual, nor in anticipation can it be a cause of terror to one whose interest and purpose are beyond his own self-preservation. In my judgment, the Burial Service should assert the naturalness, the universality and the tender benignity of normal death.

I am aware that those who are anxious to maintain the present doctrine of death as embodied in the Church's burial rite are attempting to dissuade the public from criticising it adversely by pointing out, as the alternative to the Church's views, what they call the view of death which must naturally arise in the spirit of one who, having cast off the orthodox discipline of the Church, meets the death of beloved friends by no religious discipline, but simply allows the experience of grief to work its own will in the passive spirit of his bereaved soul. Comparing the wistful yearning of such so-called agnostics with the strong confidence of those who never for an instant have doubted the doctrine of the material resurrection and the spiritual continuance of the dead in the presence of Christ and the angels—as if these two attitudes of mind were the only possible ones—they find the whole advantage to be on the side of the unquestioning believer in the Church's dogmas. But I protest, in the name of common experience and of truth and logic, that it is wholly unjust to weigh against the conventional believer the soul of one who for conscience' sake has cast off the teachings of the Church, but has not yet come under the discipline of any other philosophy of life and death. The mind of one who, perhaps with a mighty struggle and anguish, has cast off teachings which his judgment had grown to resent as untrue and pernicious, but has not yet

found other interpretations to take their place, cannot fairly be described as the mind of the natural man. For it is natural that the man shall of himself construct in thought principles which to him shall interpret his deepest experiences and which shall justify what he feels to be the supreme ends of existence. This being the case, it cannot be permitted to the defenders of the present dogmas involved in the Burial Service to say, as they do, that if its doctrines be abandoned we shall have to introduce literary expressions of the agnostic's pathetically hopeless cravings. These undoubtedly find in modern literature exquisite utterance. For example, there are Swinburne's lines, in his "Ave atque Vale : In Memory of Charles Baudelaire," where he cries :—

Thou art far too far for wings of words to follow,
Far too far off for thought or any prayer.
What ails us with thee, who art wind and air ?
What ails us gazing where all seen is hollow ?
Yet with some fancy, yet with some desire,
Dreams pursue death as winds a flying fire ;
Our dreams pursue our dead and do not find.
Still, and more swift than they, the thin flame flies,
The low light fails us in elusive skies ;
Still the foiled earnest ear is deaf, and blind
Are still the eluded eyes.

It is evident from these lines that Swinburne had never heard of the glad fact that there is a Comforter, and that he is always ready to bless. Or is it that the character of Baudelaire—even if not that of the poet who mourned his death—and the relation between them, did not contain the factors which condition the inpouring of the Spirit ? But even so, if there be souls disciplined to nothing deeper than Swinburne's mood, should they not be permitted to voice it at the burial of one they love ?

Yet when we discard views of death which seem to us in-

compatible with facts or unjustifiable because unverifiable, it does not follow that we must catch up with any—the first and most superficial—thought about death which obtrudes itself upon us ; nor are we compelled to dwell upon the direst aspect of our loss. Of a thousand moods and views, no one of which contradicts the requirements of a critical imagination, it behoves educational statesmen to select for presentation in ritual those which will most tenderly call back the heart of the bereaved to the remaining interests and duties of life, and will tone up their stricken will to an unprecedented strength of purpose. Over-against the doctrines of the traditional discipline should be set not the groping fancies of rudderless wills in conflict with grief but the teachings of the new humanism, none the less inward and spiritual because social in outlook, virile in purpose and keen in zest of work and achievement.

Among the views which no philosophic scepticism can impugn falls to be considered first, although it be the least inspiring, the doctrine of the naturalness of death. Perhaps no better formulation of it for liturgic use can be found or could be devised than is contained in these words from the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius :—

Do not despise death, but be well content with it, since this too is one of those things which nature wills. For such as it is to be and to grow old, and to increase and to reach maturity, and to have teeth and beard and grey hairs, and to beget and to be pregnant and bring forth, and all other natural operations which the seasons of thy life bring, such also is dissolution. This, then, is consistent with the character of a reflecting man, to be neither careless nor impatient nor contemptuous with respect to death, but to wait for it as one of the processes of nature.

A second doctrine, which is not only beyond question but which every spiritual teacher must recognise as altogether beneficial in its disciplinary effect, is that in the

economy of species the universal fact of the death of individuals cannot be an evil, but that on the contrary it deserves not only our calm acceptance but a joyous welcome. The most precious characteristics of human life cannot be conceived as possible, except on the basis that individuals cease to be ; and therefore, to one who loves his race more than himself, anything but praise of death as a cosmic institution is impossible.

Indeed, even as concerns the individual's own outlook, it is intellectually and emotionally impossible not to be reconciled to the fact of normal death. If we consider the case of great sufferers or evil-doers, we can but rejoice that their earth-life comes to an absolute end. And I have of late heard champions of the Church doctrine discourage as unworthy of active workers any rejoicing in anticipation of their own death. These cavillers say that to greet death as a friendly visitant is incompatible with a sense of one's own spiritual dignity, and must be placed on the level of yawning from physical fatigue after the day's drudgery. But no unbiassed person, knowing well the deeper trends and purer emotions of human nature, could trace any gladness at the approach of death to drowsiness of the spirit, for there is no such attribute of mind. Smiles in welcome of death radiate only from souls that love righteousness. To saints death is "dear" and "beauteous" ; hence poets call it

the jewel of the just,
Shining nowhere but in the dark ;

but no human testimony reports that it has ever revealed its radiance to the base. Accordingly, in praising death as such, the liturgy of the Church would be speaking the secret disclosed only to the good, and thereby would be witnessing for righteousness.

But to arrive at peace with death does not involve a benumbing of oneself to the anguish of bereavement. The mourner for whom death is thus swallowed up in victory does not cease to feel when a loved one dies that

this losing is true dying,
This is lordly man's down-lying,
This his slow but sure reclining,
Star by star his world resigning ;

but he experiences the "joy that includes all the pain, includes it and transforms it and transcends it"; for him, "the Light of the World is a light that is saturated with the darkness which it has overcome and transfigured."

No one who asks what attitude ought to be encouraged can fail to see that it would be socially advantageous if, although not holding unverifiable doctrines, men could await their own death and that of their loved ones not only without terror or with indifference but with a sense that all is well. That citizen will be most happy and efficient who is not only glad to stay to the end, but at the end, even in face of the possibility of personal annihilation, is glad to go. This attitude should be encouraged. The liturgy of the Burial Service should include fitting embodiments of it, such as are to be found abundantly in prose and verse. It is expressed with dignity in William Cullen Bryant's lines :—

So live, that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan that moves
To the pale realms of shade, where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not like the quarry slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon ; but, sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.

It is heard again in Mr Malcolm Quin's stately hymn, where the lines occur :—

Not endless life but endless love I crave,
 The gladness and the calm of holier springs,
 The hope that makes men resolute and brave,
 The joyful life in the great life of things.

The soul that loves and works will need no praise,
 But, fed with sunlight and with morning breath,
 Will make our common days eternal days,
 And fearless greet the mild and gracious death.

And it is not impossible that the revisers of the Burial Service will see fit to substitute for one of its three opening sentences, or to add as supplementary, these words from Whitman :—

Praised be the fathomless universe
 For life and joy, and for objects and knowledge curious,
 And for love, sweet love ; but praise ! praise ! praise !
 For the sure-enwinding arms of cool-enfolding death.

In order to make clear the consistency of such laudation of death with energetic effort in working for the chief ends of life, it will be necessary for the burial rite to remind mourners that the death of individuals never can thwart the purpose of a good life, because its ends are the immediate consciousness of doing right, and the social order, which not only survives but even requires the death of the individual. Mourners must have been disciplined emotionally and intellectually to identify the eternal life with that which spends itself for the community ; then it will be possible for them to resolve the great paradox of righteousness, that by losing his life man finds it ; then they can enter into the exultation of such words as these :—

Bring, Death, thy wintry blight—
 The darkness of the night
 That hath no star !
 'Tis not of life the length,
 It is the depth and strength
 Eternal are.

Or these :—

Hath man no second life ? Pitch this one high !
 Sits there no judge in heaven our sin to see ?
 More strictly, then, the inward judge obey !

Or these :—

Doth life resemble clouds that come and go ?
 Or fitful sparks that but a moment glow ?
 Not so !
 Man's life is vast, and deeper than the sea ;
 His purpose giveth birth to destiny ;
 He moulds and carves his own futurity.

There can be no doubt that, irrespective of the Church's dogmas, the discipline of moral experience engenders in the soul of man a deep organic sense of the friendliness of death. This sense is prior to any theory or philosophy which can explain and justify it to the logical judgment and classify it in any system of common sense. On the mere basis of the fact that men of deepest insight, though holding mutually conflicting theories, love death as much as they love life, we are justified, with Whitman, in praising death. We are even justified, with Plato, in asserting that no evil can befall a good man in death. But this organic sense that death is no evil does not furnish a logical justification for the statement either that death involves the extinction of the individual consciousness or that the individual consciousness survives it.

It must never be forgotten that the doctrines both of the survival of the spirit and of the resurrection of the body

have been invented to account for the deep organic love and admiration of the just for death, and that this admiration is not itself by any means a consequence of the doctrines which were invented to explain it. They are at best but myths, the truth behind them being the glad acceptance of death. If, therefore, we accept only as poetic, as a myth, any statement in regard to death which transcends verification, we are altogether justified. We then entertain it only tentatively, as an approximate but evidently inadequate explanation of some prior emotional valuation. In this way it seems to me allowable to entertain the thought of personal immortality, and even of the resurrection of the body; and passages in the present Burial Service which assert these doctrines might well be allowed to stand, provided their use be optional and not compulsory. Were the use of them thus made optional, only those would use them who found their emotion, as it were, interpreted by them and assigned a place in their own scheme of existence. There can be no doubt that the valiant sense of superiority to death which accompanies heroic and defiant love acts exactly as if death did not annihilate the individual existence either of spirit or body. This is no proof that it will not have such an effect, but it is an imaginative presentation of the mood of the valiant lover. Thus it is that Browning's assertion of faith in reunion with the one he loves, in the poem "Prospice," is sublime and possesses entire subjective truth even for a reader who does not for an instant believe its assertions to be objectively valid. The valiant lover feels and acts as he would feel and act if things were to be as Browning says—that

The black minute's at end,
And the elements' rage, the fiend-voices that rave,
Shall dwindle, shall blend,

Shall change ; shall become first a peace out of pain,
Then a light, then thy breast,
O thou soul of my soul ! I shall clasp thee again,
And with God be the rest !

What the believers, however, in spiritual or material resurrection for the individual must learn is to allow equal liberty of assertion to those who altogether deny any such continuance after death. For one needs only to note the emotional accompaniment of dogmatic denials of immortality in order to discover that they have their origin in exactly the same valiant superiority to death out of which the Christian dogmas have arisen. They, therefore, should allow in a national Burial Service the option of the denial as well as the affirmation of immortality, though they may protest that the denial is as unverifiable as the affirmation. Those who deny existence after death look upon death as the great deliverer from pain and sin, and they are constantly asserting—as Shelley does in the lines which I have quoted from him—that the departed have escaped from calumny and pain. Yet how can they prove this ? What incontrovertible evidence is there that the consciousness does not survive the dissolution of the body—which itself, beyond all doubt, never could be proved to have any existence independent of the minds which perceived it ? There is no proof ; yet Shelley's lines have as good a foundation as have affirmations of immortality and physical resurrection. Shelley felt in regard to Keats as he would have felt if he had known that Keats had outsoared the shadow of our night ; and on the strength of this feeling he made the assertion, and was justified in doing so. In the same way, Swinburne, in the closing lines of the last stanza of his poem to the memory of Baudelaire, transcends his own unsatisfied yearning for communion, and rises to the sublime utter-

ance of a peace which he cannot express except by the thought that, even with Baudelaire, all is well in death :—

Content thee, howsoe'er, whose days are done ;
 There lies not any troublous thing before,
 Nor sight nor sound to war against thee more,
 For whom all winds are quiet as the sun,
 All waters as the shore.

Perhaps I have sufficiently indicated the ideas which, in my judgment, a burial service should embody, and have cited a sufficient number of literary expressions of them to furnish examples with which to compare the various items of the existing burial rite.

After the opening rubric, which we have already examined, another enjoins that the priests and clerks meeting the corpse at the entrance of the churchyard and going before it, either into the church or towards the grave, shall say or sing :—

I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord : he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live : and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.—ST JOHN xi. 25, 26.

I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God : whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.—JOB xix. 25, 26, 27.

We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the Name of the Lord.—1 TIM. vi. 7 ; JOB i. 21.

As to the first of these verses, if it be interpreted as its context in the Gospel of St John plainly meant it to be, it can find no justification from the point of view of national expediency. That context, with an appallingly materialistic literalness, declares that Mary and Martha had implored Christ to call forth their brother Lazarus,

who had been four days dead, out of the tomb ; and the intended meaning of the verse is that Jesus, who raised Lazarus, can cause our bodies to be reanimated after we are dead, if only we believe in him before we die. Even if this be true, it neither provides a motive to social service, such as national idealism enjoins, nor does it turn the thought of the mourner in the direction which conscience sanctions. But the wording of this passage, despite its materialistic setting, lends itself admirably to a purely moral interpretation ; and universal custom, based in the necessary limitations of human speech, justifies our borrowing the verse and re-interpreting it in a sense in which it was not originally meant. Every human being who acknowledges allegiance to the ideal possesses a centre of calm within where some principle, some law, some idea, some impulse, presides in sovereignty and majesty, which he acknowledges to be his rightful lord, and which he hears declaring, "I am the resurrection and the life." He is aware that if he surrenders himself to it in perfect faith, though he were morally dead, yet shall he live.

The first clause of the second verse has rung triumphant down the Christian ages with a meaning the very opposite of that which it first possessed, and which it was intended by the writer of the book of Job to convey. The Christian implication is that the speaker is conscious of guilt, but is aware that another will wash his sins away. In the book of Job, on the contrary, the hero of the epic is vindicating his own righteousness against the accusations of unjust critics, and in this opening clause he declares his confidence that there is somebody alive who will be sure to clear his reputation. This original meaning is perhaps as little consonant with the requirements of national edification as with those of the Christian

discipline ; but inasmuch as the passage has once undergone a complete reversal of meaning, there is no reason why it should not now be subjected to a further re-interpretation which will make it serve a nation's ends. One who turns for help and strength not exclusively to the redeeming powers within the Christian stream of tendencies but to all the powers of man and nature that make for righteousness, believes that these powers are at hand and able to create in him a clean heart ; they, therefore, constitute for him a Redeemer, and he, equally with the narrowest Christian, may find a definite and holy meaning in the saying, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." Indeed, his is but the Christian meaning universalised. For this reason, the clause should remain in the Burial Service. As to the rest of the verse, I am unable by the most catholic application of the broadest method of interpretation to find in it or read into it any valuable thought ; nor can the original meaning of the writer of Job be of any moral service to anyone to-day.

The two parts of the third verse are perfectly clear in their original meaning, and it is one which, except for its commonplaceness, is appropriate in a burial rite. It is true that we bring nothing into the world and certain that we carry nothing out. It is also true that the inevitable order of nature includes the possession of friends and the losing of friends by death, and that this order is a blessed thing.

What one feels in regard to these three verses is that, except for the two clauses "I am the resurrection and the life" and "I know that my Redeemer liveth," they have no special literary value, contain no inspiring sentiment and communicate no elevating emotion. They need, therefore, to be supplemented ; and perhaps, when a committee for the revision of the Prayer Book comes to the re-

construction of the Burial Service, the merit of the passages which I have quoted from Marcus Aurelius, William Cullen Bryant, Matthew Arnold, Shelley and Whitman will secure their adoption.

Anyone who examines Psalms 39 and 90, one or both of which the rubric orders to be read immediately after the opening verses, will easily discover that neither of these psalms has been chosen because of its suitability as a whole, but because of certain verses in each which announce the transitoriness of individual existence. Now, the appositeness of expressions for this idea will readily be granted. Possibly, however, without one's quite knowing why, a protest against it, as found in the Burial Service, arises spontaneously in the judgment of the unbiassed critic; but upon reflection the protest will, I believe, be found to arise from the fact that the idea of the transitoriness of life is too often reiterated in the service, and is almost the only thought to be found there. It seems to me well that mourners should be reminded of the suddenness of death, and the possibility of its occurrence when least expected. But other thoughts, such as I have already indicated, are of still greater value; nor can the embodiment of this sentiment justify the introduction of the whole of the psalms which the rubric sanctions. For instance, in a burial rite the first five verses of Psalm 39 cannot be regarded as anything but padding. The verses are :—

I said, I will take heed to my ways : that I offend not in my tongue.

I will keep my mouth as it were with a bridle : while the ungodly is in my sight.

I held my tongue, and spake nothing : I kept silence, yea, even from good words ; but it was pain and grief to me.

My heart was hot within me, and while I was thus

musings the fire kindled : and at the last I spake with my tongue ;

Lord, let me know mine end, and the number of my days : that I may be certified how long I have to live.

Surely the first four verses have nothing to do with the import of the burial, and the fifth expresses a vain and foolish wish. Then follow the two stanzas which undoubtedly induced the compilers of the service to adopt the whole psalm :—

Behold, thou hast made my days as it were a span long : and mine age is even as nothing in respect of thee ; and verily every man living is altogether vanity.

For man walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain : he heapeth up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather them.

In these two verses one may overlook the evident exaggeration in the assertion that “every man living is altogether vanity,” on the ground of poetic licence ; and yet a danger lurks in it lest the mourner, already cast down, be utterly discouraged, and lest the springs to action, instead of being strengthened, be still further relaxed. The remainder of the psalm is likewise, for this rite, either purely padding or false philosophy of life :—

And now, Lord, what is my hope ? truly my hope is even in thee.

Deliver me from all mine offences : and make me not a rebuke unto the foolish.

I became dumb, and opened not my mouth : for it was thy doing.

Take thy plague away from me : I am even consumed by means of thy heavy hand.

When thou with rebukes dost chasten man for sin, thou makest his beauty to consume away, like as it were a moth fretting a garment : every man therefore is but vanity.

Hear my prayer, O Lord, and with thine ears consider my calling : hold not thy peace at my tears.

For I am a stranger with thee : and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.

O spare me a little, that I may recover my strength : before I go hence, and be no more seen.

In criticism upon the closing thought of this psalm, Professor Wellhausen says : "The psalmist's resignation borders on despair. It is remarkable how little he desires from JHVH. The present is cheerless ; of a future life there is no thought." It is possible that the revisers of the Prayer Book, recognising the original sentiment of the psalm, will be the more ready to omit it from the Burial Service ; and it is quite certain that those whose chief motive will be the education and edification of the people of the nation will reject it because of the unblushing egoism of the sentiment of the psalmist, who never once manifests any concern beyond his own personal affairs.

Psalm 90 will upon investigation be found still more unsuitable in a burial rite than Psalm 39. It represents the Jewish nation as speaking. I will not take space to insert it here, but instead will quote Wellhausen's criticism. He says :—

This psalm was not written by Moses. He could not look back, as its writer does, on a long unhappy history of his people. From the conclusion (vv. 13–17) it is clear that the community is speaking. Because heavy misfortune has been long weighing it down, and JHVH does not manifest his countenance or his hand, the people feel that his wrath rests upon them. But the fortunes of men in general are blended with the lot that history assigns to the community. And the wrath of God, which his people feel, is not a mere transient and extraordinary misfortune affecting Israel alone ; it is the abiding and inevitable misery of human life.

Now, this is all very well, but who, following Wellhausen's analysis, can help asking himself what possible bearing

Psalm 90 has, what message of consolation or strength, to mourners at the open grave of a friend ?

It is possible that the Old Testament contains no more suitable passages for incorporation in a burial rite than Psalms 39 and 90 ; but it would be perfectly easy to compile from various sources, in the same manner in which the makers of the Prayer Book have thrown together different passages of the Bible into a single verse in the opening of the Burial Service, and make a harmonious and edifying reading. Why not construct some such psalm on the transitoriness of life as this, which I have arranged from Jeremy Taylor, Thomas à Kempis, the Bible and Shakespeare ?—

I have seen a rose newly springing from the clefts of its hood :
 And, at first, it was fair as the morning,
 And full with the dew of heaven, as a lamb's fleece ;
 But when a ruder breath had dismantled its too youthful
 and unripe retirements,
 It began to put on darkness,
 And to decline to softness and the symptoms of a sickly
 age ;
 It bowed its head and broke its stalk ;
 And at night, having lost some of its leaves and all its
 beauty,
 It fell into the portion of weeds and outworn faces.
 The same is the portion of every man and of every woman.
 For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the
 flower of grass.
 The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away.
 Man born of woman hath but a short time to live, and is
 full of misery.
 He cometh up and is cut down like a flower ;
 He fleeth, and never continueth in one stay.
 The days of man's age are threescore and ten ;
 And though men be so strong that they come to fourscore
 years,
 Yet is their strength then but labour and sorrow,
 So soon passeth it away and we are gone.

Yet a few days, and thee the all-beholding sun shall see
no more in all his course ;

Nor yet in the cold ground, where thy pale form was laid
with many tears, nor in the embrace of ocean, shall
exist thine image.

And who shall remember thee when thou art dead ?

Death is the end of all, and man's life suddenly passeth
away like a shadow.

In the foregoing, however, there is little more than a calm recognition of the inevitableness, the suddenness and the universality of death. To be reminded of these attributes does without doubt induce strength and disinterestedness of aim ; but it ought to lead up to more heroic sentiments. If, therefore, the foregoing were to replace Psalm 39, the following might be introduced in place of Psalm 90 :—

Some have been paying their vows, and giving thanks for
a prosperous return to their house,

And the roof hath descended upon their heads,

And turned their loud religion into the deeper silence of
the grave.

How often dost thou hear this report :

Such a man is slain, another man is drowned ;

This man died eating and that man playing ; one perished
by fire, another by the sword ;

Another by the plague ; another was slain by thieves ?

If at any time thou hast seen another man die,

Make account that thou also must pass the same way.

If it be not now, then it will come :

The readiness is all.

And this, being short, might be followed by Walt
Whitman's magnificent chant :—

O sane and sacred death !

The sights of the open landscape and the high-spread sky
are fitting,

And life, and the fields, and the huge and thoughtful night ;

The night in silence under many a star,

The ocean shore, and the husky whispering wave whose
 voice I know,
 And the soul turning to thee, O vast and well-veiled
 Death,
 And the body gratefully nestling close to thee.

Come, lovely and soothing Death :
 Undulate round the world, serenely arriving : arriving
 In the day, in the night, to all, to each,
 Sooner or later : delicate Death !

Dark Mother, always gliding near with soft feet,
 Have none chanted for thee a song of fullest welcome ?
 Then I chant it for thee : I glorify thee above all :
 I bring thee a song, that, when thou must indeed come,
 come unflinchingly.

The next item of the Burial Service is the Lesson, taken from the 15th chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. Before I give my criticism, it may be well to state that its inappropriateness is so glaring as not to have escaped the outspoken censure of many devout Churchmen. Indeed, by a canon of the year 1890 the Scottish Episcopal Church ordained that, with the sanction of the Bishop, another lesson may be substituted for this. "In the diocese of Edinburgh," says Bishop Dowden, in his work on *The Prayer Book in its Literary and Liturgical Aspects*, "permission under this provision has been given to use (1) 1 Thess. iv. 13 to the end of the chapter, or (2) Revelation viii. 9 to the end of the chapter. Under the same provision, the use of St Mark x. 13 to the end of verse 16 has been sanctioned permissively on the occasion of the burial of an infant or little child." Here we find a historical practice illustrating several principles which I have already advocated. The peculiar circumstance of the death of a child has been felt by the Scottish Church to justify special items in the Burial Service, thus recognising the distinction, which I have urged as radical, between normal and

premature death. Also the policy of alternatives is illustrated ; and, indeed, not only one but two alternatives have been sanctioned, while the original lesson still remains at the option of those who prefer it. Still more interesting and encouraging is it to note that the unmistakable motive for these changes is a more delicate and tender deference for the feelings of the mourners and for the character and circumstance of the dead.

Another passage of Bishop Dowden's book overtly expresses these motives : he says, for instance, in reference to the "obscure verse" of the present lesson, "Else what shall they do which are baptised for the dead?" and concerning "the recondite discussion and apologetic argument in verses 36-41," that it may be seriously questioned whether the introduction of this matter "is quite appropriate to the sorrow of hearts bereaved." He further adds, "The objection to our present lesson is not that it is too long, but that much of it is somewhat out of harmony with the occasion. It is within the experience of not a few that there is something inappropriate and harsh to those who really mourn, in the introduction, at the solemn hour of the burial of some loved one, of such a verse as verse 39." The verse to which the Bishop alludes is this : "All flesh is not the same flesh ; but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds." Yet to many—and perhaps an increasing number of those who have thought most on the problems of life and death, and have sympathised most widely and deeply—this is perhaps one of the least offensive verses in the whole of the lesson. What could be more unbecoming, for instance, than that the Burial Service should contain a prophecy made two thousand years ago, unmistakably in reference to something that was expected to happen in the very generation

in which St Paul lived, and yet which everybody perfectly well knows failed to take place? What consolation of confident trust in the sincerity and wisdom of an authorised religion can the mourner feel when he hears its officials read a prophecy which is known to have been false? The lesson contains this statement of St Paul's: "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump (for the trumpet shall sound), and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." Yet they have all slept, in the sense in which the Apostle prophesied they would not, and none of them were changed in the twinkling of an eye; and that last trump, which was to raise the dead, never sounded. In reference to the passage about being baptised for the dead, the chief objection to it is not, as Bishop Dowden suavely suggests, its obscurity; for in fact it is not in the least obscure; the objection to it is that it exposes in the fullest light what to us seems a superstitious and altogether an unpleasant practice of the early Church. There was a time when many inanimate objects were baptised; in accord with this general superstition it was regarded as possible to baptise by proxy, and thus it came about that sometimes a friend submitted to the rite on behalf of a dead person. The orthodox judgment of the Church has dropped this practice, and yet the old-fashioned presupposition that everything the Bible says is of value was still so prevalent in 1662 in England as to permit the retention of this record of superstition.

Probably in the whole Bible no one passage could be found so full of false prophecy, of false science and forced logic, of references to archaic custom, of controversial theology and of ethical teaching unworthy of the Church, as are condensed into this lesson selected to soothe human

hearts at the moment of their intensest sorrow. It is false science and forced logic—it is exploded biology and inconsequential reasoning—to say that a seed which one sows is not quickened except it die, and that therefore a man must die in order to be quickened into a higher life. It was excusable in Paul, but in the face of modern biology it is not excusable (because it is not honest) in the Church, to reason by an analogy that presupposes as fact what is known to be fanciful. I have said the passage contains controversial theology ; but it would have been safe even to say that it contains theology which is contrary to the fundamental orthodox doctrine of the Trinity. St Paul says, “When all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.” How does this square with the co-equality and co-eternity of the Son ?

Nor can any possible subtlety of exposition hide from our conscience the moral scepticism involved in St Paul’s petulant proposal, “Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.” His reasoning presupposes that there could be no motive to hold him back from self-indulgence except his belief in personal immortality. He might have been justified in reasoning that his ardent propaganda was in vain if the dead rise not ; he might have been justified in saying, “Let us stop preaching the doctrine of resurrection if there be no such thing” ; but altogether reprehensible is his positive injunction that, if such be the case, we should turn to a life of selfish pleasure.

The passages which I have already cited from the Burial Lesson are enough to prove its inappropriateness, although it contains many more sentences scarcely less objectionable. Indeed, the only part which might well commend itself to everyone who accepts death as a benignant fact is wholly outside of Paul’s pedantic learning and logic, and yet it is

the part in order to justify which he introduces his learning and logic. His argumentation all leads up to what needed no introduction or defence whatever—namely, the statement that “Death is swallowed up in victory,” and the glorious acclamation, “O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.” It might be well, therefore, that, when the Church of England follows that of Scotland by proposing alternatives to this lesson, she should also grant permission to use only such parts of the existing lesson as shall seem fit to the officiating clergyman or his bishop.

If alternatives to the present Burial Lesson are to be adopted, what shall they be? I shall not attempt to suggest other passages from the Bible. It might be well, however, in passing, to point out that 1 Thessalonians, chapter iv., from the 13th verse to the end of the chapter, which the Scottish Church sanctions, contains a passage which cannot fail to give deep moral offence to those who count intellectual honesty an essential feature in true religion; for, like the one in Paul, the passage declares that “We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep; for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.” Let it here be noted that objection to this passage need not arise from disbelief in miracles in the least, but wholly from the painful truth that this hope of the writer turned out in the event to be erroneous, and it is not fair nor kind to lacerate the hearts of mourners by reference to the most pathetic of all religious illusions. The only

possibility that this quotation from Thessalonians will not produce such an effect would be that it should fail to have any meaning whatever to the listener. But if that were the case, why should it be read? It must further be remembered that here it is not simply the sceptic whose feelings would be lacerated; on the contrary, he least of all would suffer. It is the devout believer in the Bible and in the doctrines of the Church whose anguish must be most acute if he be intelligent enough to have learned—as now all the better critics are pointing out—that the first Christians believed that the triumphant coming of their Lord was to be in their own day and generation.

More germane to the purpose of this book than the citing of suitable alternative lessons from the Bible is the consideration of passages from other literature. But even of these my consideration must be altogether brief. Indeed, I would only call attention to two passages in Plato, which could not fail, if incorporated into the burial rite, to serve in the highest degree the end for which any national liturgy should be established. Take the passage in the *Apology*, beginning, “Not much time will be gained, O Athenians, in return for the evil name which you will get from the detractors of the city, who will say that you killed Socrates, a wise man”; and ending, “I suppose that these things may be regarded as fated, and I think that they are well.” Here Socrates is represented as teaching that there are worse calamities which may befall a man than death, and therefore more terrible woes which might prostrate a man’s friends than that of bereavement at his death; for the theme is that unrighteous life is more to be shunned than righteous death. It is a thought which instantly awakens moral wonder and a sense of the dignity of the human spirit and the meaning of duty. It tends to dry the tears by drawing the

emotions into thought for others, for the living, and towards to-morrow's opportunity of service. Plato's object is to diminish the fear of death and to intensify the fear of wrong-doing ; and this is exactly what all patriotic teachers and wise statesmen must desire to see accomplished. Still more consoling and edifying is the death-scene in the *Phædo*. Here we have presented to us a picture of the way a man ought to die.

Immediately following the Burial Lesson is a rubric which enjoins that the priest shall say or the priest and clerks shall sing :—

Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up, and is cut down, like a flower ; he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay.

In the midst of life we are in death : of whom may we seek for succour, but of thee, O Lord, who for our sins art justly displeased ?

Yet, O Lord God most holy, O Lord most mighty, O holy and most merciful Saviour, deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal death.

Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts ; shut not thy merciful ears to our prayer ; but spare us, Lord most holy, O God most mighty, O holy and merciful Saviour, thou most worthy Judge eternal, suffer us not, at our last hour, for any pains of death, to fall from thee.

The first two verses here are but a reiteration of the idea that life is transitory and our continuance not in our own hands. In the third and fourth verses, with their intense ejaculations of names and epithets for God, and in the prayer to be delivered from the bitter pains of eternal death and prevented at our last hour from falling from God, there is preserved to us an agony and a conception of the future life which have grown rarer and rarer as the nations have evolved from under the ideas that dominated and darkened the tenth and eleventh

centuries. Probably nothing but a plebiscite made among the mourners of our day who have listened to the Burial Service of the Church could prove or disprove the correctness of my impression that for the great majority of devout Christians to-day these cries from a bygone age sound like "a dying echo from a falling wall." But I am ready to risk the assertion, although it is neither to be proved nor disproved ; so strong is my belief that the tendency of my sentiment is due to currents within the Church itself.

The next item in the service is the declaration to be said by the priest while earth is being cast upon the body. There is no occasion to quote or criticise it, as its essential point is the assertion of the hope of resurrection, with which I have already dealt in various aspects. The next following item (to be said or sung) is one which, although alternatives might be offered, should in my judgment be retained, because besides its literal and original significance it is capable of re-interpretation : "I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, From henceforth blessed are the dead which die in the Lord : even so saith the Spirit ; for they rest from their labours." This may be literal fact ; but it is also undeniably beautiful poetry, and everyone who has made his peace with death feels in it an essential truth that is independent of the imagery. The supplication to be uttered by the priest after the Lord's Prayer needs no special comment ; but it may not be out of taste, in order to show the need of alternatives, to call attention to the sentence, "We give thee hearty thanks, for that it hath pleased thee to deliver this our brother out of the miseries of this sinful world," and to remind my reader of the painful incongruity in the practice of the Church, in that it pronounces this statement over the dead bodies of persons who have been put to

death by the law of the land. Yet, until an alternative is allowable, this incongruity will continue.

In the closing collect, no new sentiments are introduced except that contained in the admirable words, "We meekly beseech thee, O Father, to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness." Here, happily, we find the Church rising from a literal acceptance of the doctrine of personal immortality and physical resurrection, and using the idea of resurrection as a symbol of ethical regeneration. Such a metamorphosis of the doctrines of the Church needs to be developed, in order to transform the whole Book of Common Prayer in accordance with the new social vision of the Spirit of Man.

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